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AUGUST 1938

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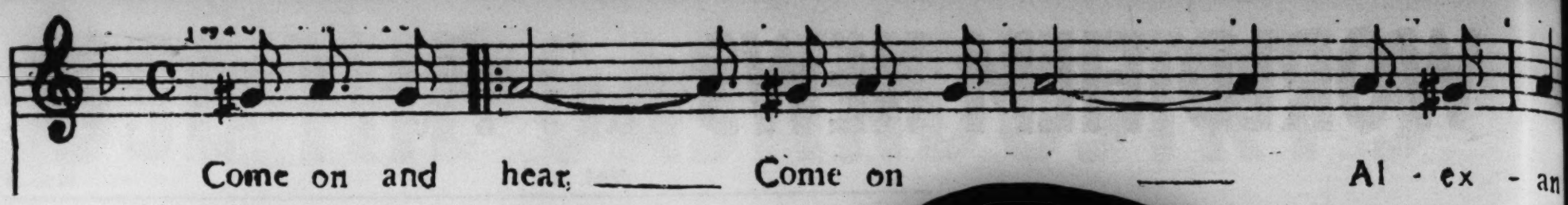


Irving Berlin

ALEXANDER'S RAG-TIME BAND

Discordant Notes by Stan Patchett

LEANING back in the plush glory of the new Twentieth Century-Fox projection room, vainly trying to keep my wandering thoughts focused on the newest Twentieth Century-Fox epic (I quote from the 24-sheeter) *Alexander's Rag-time Band*, I was reminded of the time when I was a fight manager—with a tearaway welterweight under my wing who could lick his weight in wildcats, as long as the other guy didn't tag him first.

Tony, a local boy who never quite made good, was punch shy. When he first stepped up from the amateurs he knocked all his opponents colder than a Coca Cola, then some gorilla beat him to the punch, and the memory of that shellacking haunted him for the rest of his fighting days.

Of course, there are stout hearts who beat the jabbing jinx—Joe Louis for instance.

When Max Schmeling battered young black Joe into bleeding pulp that surprising June night in 1936, Duke Ellington was moved to write a song about it called, "It Was a Sad Night in Harlem," and the wise men of Broadway shook their bald heads and muttered through their ten-cent cigars: "He'll never be the same again".

They were wrong; wise guys generally are. Last month the two leather pushers clashed again and before you could say Adolf Hitler grim-faced Joe Louis had the pride of the Nazis draped blearily over the top rope.

Hollywood has always been punch shy when it comes to handling the jazz idiom in its celluloid masterpieces, either as a background or as the featured attraction.

Fritz Lang, a lad with plenty of the old moxie, seemed to be getting somewhere in his opening department store sequence in *You and Me*, but he slipped back into the old routine before the picture was through and things were as you were again.

Somewhere along the crazy Hollywood line, *Alexander's Rag-time Band* started out as a crack Twentieth Century Limited flier—a history of jazz from ragtime to swing—but long before the journey was over it slowed down into just another musical.

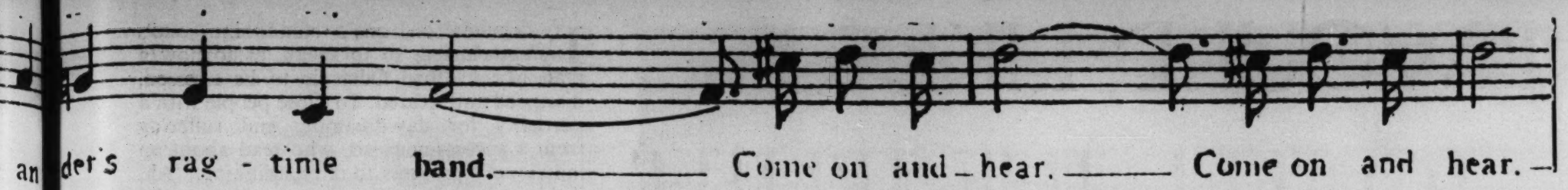
The story is the good old "Boy Meets Girl" formula, with everything going its well-worn way, even to the Big Misunderstanding sequence when The Boy (Tyrone Power) nearly, but not quite, marries the hard-boiled, but understanding torch singer (Ethel Merman) because he hasn't heard that The Girl (Alice Faye) has been divorced by the Big Hearted Friend (Don Ameche) who faded gracefully out of the picture when he realised suddenly that she had married him in an effort to forget The Boy.

Alexander's Rag-time Band takes nearly two hours to show and contains thirty of the songs which Irving Berlin has written during the last twenty-seven years.

Most of the background music is of the symphonic variety and is consequently heavy and lumbering, but in one scene—a speak-easy—Ethel Merman sings a chorus of "Blue Skies" accompanied by a small negro band. It is here just for one fleeting second, that Irving Berlin's immortal music comes to life.

The stuff is there and it's mellow, but it revives no memories of tunes that made famous such great entertainers as Al Jolson, George Jessel, Gene Austin (his record of "Blue Skies" sold over a million platters), Eddie Cantor and Ruth Etting, mainly because most film stars lack that God given gift of really selling a number.

Alice Faye used to sing with Rudy Vallee,



and she's still just another girl in a band who might have learnt something about phrasing a song if she'd studied such great jazz artists as Mildred Bailey, Billie Holiday and Ivie Anderson.

Ethel Merman, who is featured in the more torrid Berlin numbers, done up to date in the worst pseudo swing manner, is just another hotcha singer with a good pair of gams, but legs, no matter how shapely, don't send you away whistling tunes.

Somehow or other you can't help drawing comparisons between the story of *Alexander's Rag-time Band* and Dorothy Baker's "Young Man with a Horn",* the first novel inspired by the life of a famous swing musician—the late Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke, a trumpet player with Paul Whiteman.

There are two sides to jazz—Negro and Jewish—one extemporisation or swing, the other sweetly sentimental, with a catch in the throat like the despairing cry of a Cantor.

Little Jewish boy, Irving Berlin, with a passionate belief in the music he wrote, relied as much on the story his lyric told as the mood his melodies created.

Living in Chicago as a boy, Bix Beiderbecke haunted the river boats that paddled all the way from New Orleans up the Mississippi, drinking in the pure jazz played by the negro bands on the boats, bands that featured such great jazz names as Fate Marable, King Oliver and Louis Armstrong.

Jazz, as Bix played it, was improvised, unwritten and spontaneous.

The story of Rick Martin, the hero of "Young Man with a Horn", is the story of many a swing man. Meeting up with a bunch of negro musicians, Rick learns that the rattle of the tunes turned out like sausages by Tin Pan Alley could be turned into a swelling, soul satisfying symphony when they were ad libbed.

Rick turns from the piano to the cornet—just as Bix did—"because it's nearer the head". He quickly smashes his way to the top and is soon featured with a name band. Then he marries a girl who tries to find out what makes him like he is, with the result that Rick turns to drink for the understanding and companionship he hungers for. He dies, right back where he started, clutching at his handful of stars.

In her introduction to her book, Dorothy Baker frankly confesses that the job of interpreting the life and death of a swing musician was too much for her. "One of these days even his records will be played out", she says, but such is not the case with *Alexander's Rag-time Band.* Admitted it could never be a "Young Man with a Horn", but if Kathryn Scola and Lamar Trotto, who wrote it, had concentrated on the story behind the writing of Irving Berlin's music—it's a fact that numbers like "All Alone", "You Forgot to Remember" and "Blue Skies" represent milestones of emotion in Irving Berlin's life, then we might have had something.

Consider a brief synopsis of Irving Berlin's real life story.

Born Israel Baline in Temmen, Russia, he was the son of a rabbi, who moved his family to America and settled in New York's overpopulated East Side when Irving was four years old.

When he was six, the dark eyed little boy was intoning the sad and sacred songs of his race in the choir at his father's synagogue.

His father died when he was twelve and he was forced to sell newspapers and sing in honky tonks to make a living.

His singing was as bad then as it is now, but with the aid of a set of coloured slides (remember?) his illustrated heart-aches brought him in fifty cents a night.

At fourteen he was a singing waiter—wrestling with plates at notorious "Nigger Mike's" in Chinatown. It was there he wrote his first song, "Marie From Sunny Italy". It failed to set Broadway afire, selling only a few copies.

Undiscouraged, he continued to plug away at song writing, finally hitting the ball with a whacky tune called "My Wife's Gone to the Country", which swept America.

In 1911, the world stopped cake walking and bunny hugging to start jigging to "Alexander's Rag-time Band". Irving Berlin had turned rag-time into jazz.

Two women brought happiness and sorrow into Berlin's life.

In February of 1913 he married Dorothy Goetz, a childhood sweetheart. She died in July of that same year.

Twelve years later, after a stormy courtship, he married Ellin Mackay, daughter of the cable magnate.

Socialite Ellin was dropped from the Social Register, but it must have been worth it because Mr. and Mrs. Irving Berlin are about the happiest couple in show business to-day.

I repeat, had Irving Berlin's life been used as a basis for *Alexander's Rag-time Band* we might have had something, but I still doubt if life could have been breathed into a cast of such stereotyped actors. Tyrone Power is a nice looking boy, but he's no Irving Berlin by any stretch of imagination.

Sad to relate, that ole debbil swing has been thrust into *Alexander's Rag-time Band.* After the War is over (when heroes come back with a limp and a habit) our hero, who has taken the name of Alexander's Rag-time Band—sort of cute that—stages a *Swing Concert* at Carnegie Hall, complete with a ballet and a band of such unwieldy proportions, the like of which has never been seen or heard since the days of once portly Paul Whiteman and his "Concert" orchestra.

As sure as you're bored this sequence was added to the film following the sensational success of killer-diller Benny Goodman and his cats at the self same Carnegie Hall. It's too bad the boys in the back room at Hollywood didn't check up and find out just what a swing concert looked and sounded like, and how many men there were in the band.

Perhaps it's just as well after all, for, as Fats Waller put it to the anxious alligator who wanted to know just what swing was:

"Lady, if you have to ask questions about it, then jes' don't mess around with it!"

The original Dixie Band (*Courtesy "The Melody Maker"*)

*Gollancz (7s. 6d.)

'I WOULD LIKE TO TELL THE TRUTH'

CLIFFORD ODETS, stage and screen writer, talks to Leslie Perkoff

Clifford Odets (*Talbot*)

IT depends on one's standpoint, one's *weltanschauung* so to speak, as to how a man like Clifford Odets is to be assessed, discussed and treated. To those people with a partiality for day-dreaming and suffering from a success-neurosis, who read about an individual's progress to fame, thinking, "Ah, if this were only me," and then taking on the hallucination that it might be them, the story of Odets' career might offer thrilling material.

Starting out with the intention of becoming a musician, Odets ultimately moved in front of the footlights with touring stock-companies, and in that sphere as an actor succeeded in penetrating the New York Group Theatre Company. Then this young man who saw eye-to-eye with the stage, dared to show the very able and glib American dramatists a thing or two about writing plays charged with some living truths. His play *Waiting for Lefty*, with its analysis of U.S.A. trade union conditions, had an almost hypnotic effect on the preconceived tastes of theatre-goers. It was real, it was alive; moreover, the common everyday speech in it had a peculiar poetic flavour. Propagandist, no doubt, but it was also first-rate theatre and entertainment. ("Good art can make money," Odets says.) Even certain people to whom social truths are anathema, were impressed when they saw the Unity Theatre production of *Waiting for Lefty* in England, if not for its content, then for its powerful idiom and treatment of real characters.

Odets moved on, wrote more plays, became recognised as one of America's most powerful dramatists, went to Hollywood as a scenarist, wrote the scripts of *The General Died at Dawn*, and other films.

There are people, of course, who see in each public figure a different sort of identification; these are the incorrigible "romantics," the disappointed and loveless perhaps who are fed with rumours and scandal. They have seen in Odets a different sort of celebrity: the husband of a world-famous screen actress with trouble brewing on the domestic front. (It could only have been deplored in certain circles that some of the first questions that were fired at Odets on setting foot in England were about his private life.)

Luckily there are others whose interest in Odets is dictated to by different reasons; people who see in him someone who reflects the contemporary scene like a portent and who has discharged the rich and troubled idiom of reality into the modern drama. In many European countries, the modern creative drama is a still-born proposition; only the classics are given first place where it is dangerous and often seditious to discuss the present. Here, too, in England the tempo of the modern drama is unhappily sluggish. We have a Bridie, true. But where are the dramatists who might carry on in the spirit of a Shaw? And where are more plays that might come from the pen of a Sean O'Casey?

Rather tritely expressed, Odets comes as a breath of fresh air on to the English-speaking stage, and at the age of thirty-two already deserves to be listened to and watched. And

soliciting his views on the cinema, he can only confirm the belief of those who recognise the dead-end restricting its development.

"I wrote the first two scripts for the film *Blockade*," he says. "They kept changing it about, and when I saw the film, I couldn't find one line left of what I'd written. I don't turn to the cinema as an artist; it's not a question of art at all. With Hollywood it's all a matter of business and making money. And I've got this feeling about Hollywood: they've got a magnificent equipment going on there, a marvellous, awe-inspiring set-up. Yet it labours and labours and brings out nothing but mice. I've never sat through a film, y' know, without thinking to myself, 'That's not true. It's a lie'."

A *Daily Express* theatre reporter, John Grime, has said about Odets' play, *Golden Boy*, and its central character, Joe Bonaparte, "Of Joe, these characters and the rest in the play it is possible to say, as it is of the story itself, 'That's right. Yes, it is so'."

This comment seems to tally with Odets' position as an artist and the desire to mirror truthful human relationships. Thus the cinema as it is to-day cannot claim him, though he might say about it, "It's a great form. Why, it's almost presumptuous of me to say so, I'd even rather go to the pictures than the theatre. Films are more entertaining. But I don't pay any attention to the stories. I just love to watch the camera moving about."

"The General Died at Dawn." Scripted by Odets

IT is known that a good deal of modern fiction, reportage and even poetry have been influenced by the cinema. Has he not been aware of this influence in the work of some modern writers?

Odets is not sure about this. He mentions the name Otis Ferguson as one of America's most brilliant writers on films and seems to miss the point of the argument, but questioned as to whether his own plays have been influenced by the cinema, says, "In my last play, for instance, the form comes from Shakespeare," and about *Waiting for Lefty* adds, "It may be cinematic, but its basic pattern certainly comes from the old negro minstrel show."

I think of the "Pantheon" of stars, many of whom can be termed louts and Runyonesque dolls. I also think of the profound hypnotic effect these very human stars have on the general public who identify themselves with them. Maybe I am biased, and often prefer Donald Duck to the Dietrichs and the Clark Gables. I put the problem of the star-system to Odets, who is able to say, "All people tend to shirk responsibility and don't delve deeply into human relationships. The movie-clichés with their superb polish help them to forget their own valuable experience and furnish them with ready-made patterns of behaviour. That's where the stars and the cinema have a harmful effect. That's also where Hollywood is really amoral."

And returning to matters filmic in between "off the racket" observations and cross-questions, Odets ventures to say something about the people who gravitate to the film Mecca. "It's funny, but in the past they killed 'em with starvation. Now they kill 'em with too much money. They die of too good foods and a surplus of recognition. Every type of writer and musician comes to Hollywood. The finest in the world. My God, I even walked into Stravinsky there. But these people are not permitted to do the things they want to do. Their talents are not used. There's that whole business about making water-tight plots about things always on the superficial level. It's impossible. Writing and directing can only come out of your own feeling, and an artist can only create what he himself has experienced."

And if he were permitted to do the work that he wanted to do in films?

"I would like to make films about quite ordinary and simple things and people, to produce that emotional level that is lacking. I would like to tell the truth. Take the human relationship that exists between just a man and a woman. That's never been done truthfully. No. Every great theme that's handled is besmirched, devitalised and dehumanised. To think of all the great material that Hollywood has degraded! They've certainly got a great nose there for finding great material, but they finish up by making it worthless. A great organ like the cinema has no sense of public responsibility."

Further, Odets asserts pointedly that all this superficial level and waste can only be "the fruits of a business culture." And to the question, "What shall be done?" shrugs his shoulders, grins and says, "If a soap-manufacturer gives you a brand of soap, you either use it or don't."

Presumably implying powerful social factors, Odets asserts finally, "There's no art, no plays, nothing, so long as the artist doesn't get his strength from the masses. Without that, it ain' gonner be."

Certainly there can never be a real and vital theatre and cinema without the support of those millions whose senses are often dulled and blunted by our purveyors of popular "culture." But perhaps in America there are factors at work designed to produce the antithesis of this incredible hokum. In England there may be young men like Auden and Isherwood, important for what they have done and might do, yet left out in the cold because of their introspection and insufficiency of their environment. It requires an Odets, however, to draw on the rich and necessary material from those very millions whose lives speak a language foreign to that of the extraordinary sophists and more feasible drawing-room types. That there are many among the broader mass of people who still go on aping these types and repress what is most native to their own emotional make-up, the nature of the present-day cinema is partially to blame.

One must also not forget the rôle of the "soap-manufacturers" whose publicity departments still go on prattling about their "wonderful" and "stupendous" offerings; neither can one hoodwink oneself into believing that Hollywood is the only centre of their activities.

STAR LAW

You can't be a movie star if you behave like Hugh Herbert, Johnny Arthur, Edgar Kennedy, or Clarence Wilson, says RUSSELL FERGUSON

WHEN Edgar Kennedy said the other day "I guess I'm one of those guys who never let himself get too big", he surely did not mean that he could have been a star if he had wanted to. Or if he did, he was very much mistaken.

A star is good looking.

Edgar Kennedy is not. It's no use telling us that there are good looks and good looks, or indulging in any sort of quibble. In the movies there is only one kind of good looks. Clive Brook, Robert Taylor, George Raft and a lot of other actors have them, and Edgar Kennedy has not, and that's all there is about it.

Nor is it any use saying, as Leslie Henson says, "My features have a certain rugged grandeur". No doubt they have, but rugged grandeur is not glamour. Let us try the words over to see how they sound. The glamorous Leslie Henson. The glamorous Edgar Kennedy. No, it will not do.

And leaving aside his figure, which is terrible, think of his temper. His temper is so bad that it has given a word to the language. When your little boy comes home from school, and you ask him "How did the teacher like your exercise?" he is as likely as not to reply "He did an Edgar Kennedy". At once you understand that the teacher tried for a bit to master himself and then put on a floor show.

Actors who have any ambitions in the direction of the stellar income groups should not behave like this.

A star has everything under control, even if he is in handcuffs. He just passes a crack to the bulls, off-hand in America, evenly through clenched teeth, in England. You may remember Cary Grant in a South American jail. A beautiful lady came to see him and said "How did you get in here?" and he just said "Influence".

A star smiles and whistles in the face of all difficulties.

Edgar Kennedy is not the only actor whose temper has kept him in the bit parts. Consider Clarence Wilson. You have seen him hopping mad any time these last twenty years. Everything seems to happen to *him*. His daughters marry all the wrong men. His office is always full of Everett Hortons and Frank McHughs and Warren Hymers. If there are trains to be lost, he loses them. If water is squirted anywhere, it goes in his face.

This kind of treatment has not improved his manners, which were bad enough to begin with. When a man has seen upwards of five hundred daughters married against his will, he is apt to become ill-tempered and to give up even pretending to be nice. Nowadays Clarence Wilson forecloses right and left, and serves writs on everybody he can think of. It was no surprise that he was so short with Paul Muni in *Emile Zola*. As soon as we saw his face we knew he was going to be mean.

He may be soured also by the misfortune, which he shares with such people as Arthur Hoyt and Donald Meek, of never having been young.

A star is young.

Clarence Wilson is not. He never was. His parents did not even do that for him. If you were to turn up his birth in the newspapers you would probably read "To Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Senr., a son, aged 55, both well".

JOHNNY ARTHUR is mean, too, but in a different way. Strangely enough, he has never been old, but it has not helped him any. He is one of those men who can't take it, whatever it is. In hundreds of films we have seen him behave in the same way. The trouble with him is just plain, cowardly meanness. He runs away at a threat, falls down at a blow, and rats in every tight corner. Whatever he does, he never takes the consequences like a man. He bubbles and cries.

A star is brave.

Does Spencer Tracy bubble and cry? No. Does Jack Holt. No. It's no use saying that Clark Gable cried in *San Francisco*, or that Colin Clive cried in *Journey's End*. These were strong men in their agony, not contemptible little squirts.

But Johnny Arthur is in the habit of it now, and that's why no girl will ever place his photo under her pillow. The very idea of it is ludicrous, like Johnny Arthur himself.

It seems also that there are other young men going the same way. Did you see Robert Newton's atrocious behaviour in *Farewell Again*? He very nearly went off his head with jealousy and forgot all about his King and country.

A star honours his King and country.

Did Leslie Banks allow Flora Robson's illness to come between him and his duty? No. Did he give way to his feelings? No. Does he ever? No. This is the inner gallantry to which the Johnny Arthurs and the Robert Newtons of this world can never hope to aspire.

It looks easy enough when Leslie Banks does it, just twisting up his face a little and going slowly up the gangway, in some films to his duty, in others to his doom. But it is only certain people who can do it his particular way, and that is one reason why stars get big salaries.

INCOMPETENCE, of course, is absolutely fatal. In this department the policemen are easily the worst, and always have been. So far as one can remember at this late date, the Keystone Cops never caught anybody.

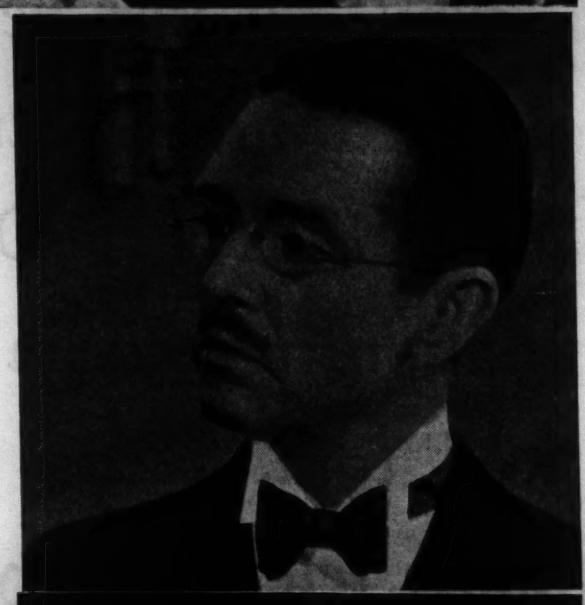
For the matter of that, the policeman in Punch and Judy is as stupid as any of them. At the present moment he is managing to get himself publicly hanged every half-hour on every beach in Britain.

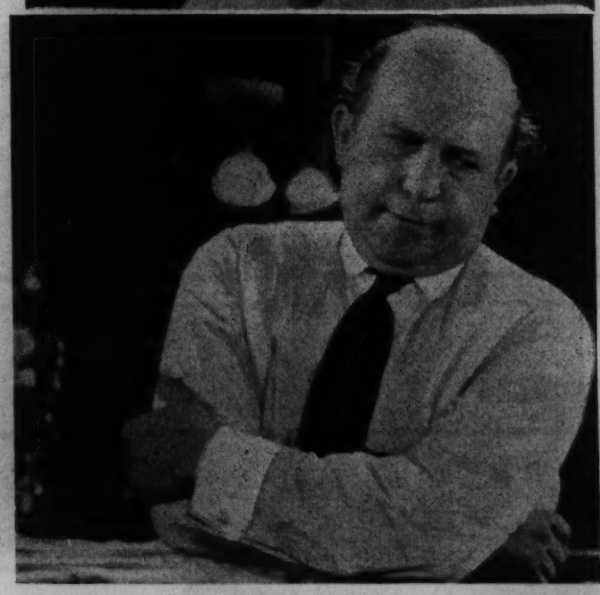
Consider this gentleman. His name is Robert Emmett O'Connor. He is one of those who has ruined his chances of stardom (if he ever had any) by becoming a policeman. You will remember him in *A Night at the Opera*. The poor fellow was given the job of catching Harpo.

A star gets his man.

But the moment we saw Robert Emmett O'Connor, we knew he was a policeman and that anybody he caught was sure to get away again. And so it was. Groucho just said, "I'll handle this", and he did.

On opposite page: Hugh Herbert. Above: Clarence Wilson, Reginald Owen, James Gleason, Lynne Overman, Edgar Kennedy.
Right: Johnny Arthur, Robert Newton, Edgar Kennedy.





By way of further illustration, here is Fred Kelsey. He is usually to be found arresting the wrong man, going in by the wrong door, following the wrong car. One would expect as much from a policeman.

A star is not a policeman (corollary of "A star gets his man").

Even in the heyday of the crime wave, it was a very rare thing for the policeman to solve the crime or kill the gangster. Some newspaperman solved the crime and some other gangster killed the gangster. Or else the gangster gave his life for something. In any case it was as much as the police could do to get there with the wagon before *rigor mortis* set in.

There are many reasons why a star is not a policeman, some of them very deep-seated. Perhaps the simplest is that the uniform is not attractive, and there is a fairly strict law which says that a star wears an attractive uniform or none at all.

FINALLY, anybody who is habitually laughed at has no hope of ever being a star.

A star is not mocked. A star is no laughing matter.

It is true that in such films as the Powell-Loy group the stars have looked pretty foolish at times, but this departure is to be regarded as a passing phase and, as the critics keep pointing out, is a breach of Star Law.

A star is always at the right end of the garden-syringe. The joke is on the other man.

This particular law rules out all the comics straight away, though most of them were never in the hunt. The plain damn fools are always being laughed at, Claude Hulbert and Claude Dampier and Claude Allister and William Claude Fields and all the other Claudes except Rains (Rains took a big chance on his Christian name).

Consider Eugene Pallette. He has tried his hand at nearly everything and made a complete hash of it. In his very first film, or near it, he was a detective, and from the very beginning it was clear that he could not detect a bad smell.

And Hugh Herbert. Pretty nearly his first film showed that his film career was to be a series of hopeless bungles, and that he would never figure with a woman in a fade-out.

In this film he was a work-shy, know-all sort of man, always wanting to show everybody how things should be done. Everything he touched went to pieces. It is true that when he had balled up pretty nearly everybody's life, and was looking down in the mouth, his wife put her arms round him and kissed him and said she loved him in spite of it all.

But she was middle-aged.

So anyone who wants to be a star must be young and good looking, and stay young and good looking till he dies of old age.

He must be smart, which means that he knows all the answers, runs the fastest, jumps the highest, catches everybody, nobody catches him, makes the grade, flies the Atlantic, swims the Channel, breaks the bank and gets the girl.

These gentlemen are not up to it, so they are not stars. We fob them off with a few hundred and keep the real money for them that keep the Star Law.

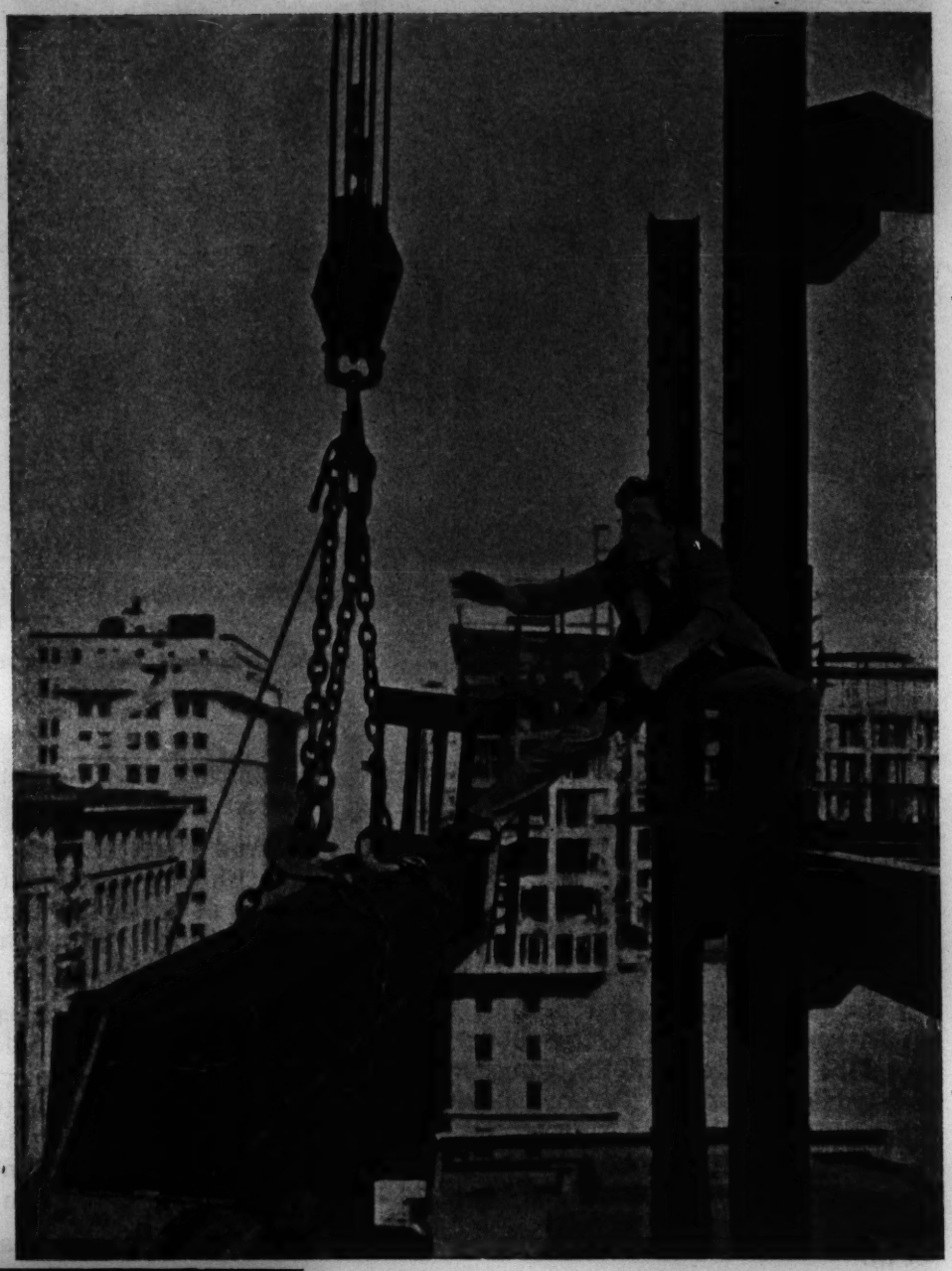
It's no use saying that you like them, or that they're the life and soul of the movies, or that they're nice even if they're not handsome, or that they're the best actors of the lot. It's no use handing out stuff about human and true to life. Human and true to life has nothing to do with it. And it's no use saying that Hugh Herbert is a beautiful man and you love him. He is not a beautiful man and you do not love him, and if you say you do, it's only a manner of speaking. Young man, would you like to be like Hugh Herbert? Young woman, would you marry him if he were?

Come now. Think of Clark Gable. Think of Robert Taylor. Think of Franchot Tone and Gary Cooper.

Love Hugh Herbert, indeed.

GRANDMA'S BOY

If I can't be funny and clean, —why, I'll just be clean, he decided many years back. ARTHUR ELTON *argues that he has been funny as well, and, in case you don't know, tells you why and how.*



Top right : "Never Weaken." *Above : "Safety Last."*

WHEN I was a small boy I went to a children's party. There was a little girl there who wore spectacles. I asked the lady who gave the party to introduce me, giving as a reason that the little girl was like Harold Lloyd. The lady thought I was a horrid small boy. But it goes to show that even seventeen years ago Harold Lloyd had a powerful hold on my imagination. I think I remember seeing his films before Chaplin's. I liked them then; I like them still. But he does not bear the identification marks that most other talented comedians carry.

He is a very competent actor, but not a great actor like Keaton. He is a good acrobat, but not a master of physical action like Chaplin. He is plain, but he does not look funny like Groucho Marx. He is one of the only screen stars, I feel sure, who could stand outside a cinema in London showing his latest film without being recognised by a fan. Indeed, I doubt if he has any fans. He has no trace of sex appeal.

Yet, Harold Lloyd is very funny, and I think getting funnier. But it is difficult to say why. Here is a plain looking man, without an attractive screen personality. He is athletic, but not outstandingly so. He just goes along. Things happen to him, and then more things happen, mostly unpleasant. And it turns out all right in the end. Just flat like that.

In fact, Lloyd brings to the screen a minimum of personality, a minimum of wit, a minimum of critical sense towards his environment (he just accepts it). He is a sort of Aunt Sally for the slings and arrows of fortune. And here, I think, lies the reason for his success.

There is a great deal of the old-fashioned gentleman about Harold Lloyd. He is so earnest about his work, so balanced, so without complexes. He has all the old-fashioned reverences. Mother, country, religion—all the institutions so often exposed to the critical analysis are accepted by him.

"I can't understand how any man could ever dissect his own mother's character," he once said. "After all—whatever she does, whatever her faults—she is your mother."

He is clean. One day one of his advisers came to him and said, "I've got it, Speed, a bit of business that will go over big!"

When he heard what it was Lloyd retorted, "Not on your life! If I can't be funny and clean—why, then I'll decide to be just clean."

When just a youngster out of high school Lloyd came to Hollywood to get into motion-pictures. Every studio to which he applied turned him down. He was determined to go ahead. Noticing that anybody who was in costume could get into a studio, Lloyd decided that there was nothing obligatory about ordinary clothes. So he got himself a costume, and from that time he has stayed on the inside.

While working as an extra in one of the studios he met another young extra named Hal Roach. After some time the two of them, with only a few hundred dollars between them, decided to go into business for themselves.

"I wasn't any meteor, I can tell you that!" comments Harold Lloyd about those early days. "But we did succeed in selling a few pictures the first year. The next we sold more. Still, that didn't seem to get me much nearer to the silk shirt. We were terribly poor in those days. We put every cent we made back into our pictures."

The first film that made Lloyd famous was a short. I forget the name. He was on top of a high building. He wanted to commit suicide. However much he tried he never succeeded. This film could have got by on situation value alone. All the logic of comedy was implicit in the situation. Lloyd had had a brilliant idea, and it did not need a great comedian to carry it out. Indeed, Lloyd was so pleased with the situation that he has repeated it at least twice, once in the famous silent film, *Safety Last*, and once in the more recent talkie, *Welcome Danger*. But the comic logic of the unfulfilled suicide is absent in the later efforts.

This is not to suggest that Harold Lloyd's early comedies were successful simply because he used novel or strange situations. The successes of *Sailormade Man*, *Grandma's Boy* and *Girl Shy* bear witness to the contrary. No, I believe that Lloyd decided, since he had not got a great comic personality in the sense that Keaton, Chaplin and the others had, to manufacture comedy without any of the usual equipment of the comedian—personality, intellect or wit. One imagines that he must have said to himself, "What is funny?" and answered, "A man falling down on a banana skin and hurting himself." From this he must have developed a theory. Anything is funny (*a*) when you are in a ridiculous difficulty and may hurt yourself, (*b*) when you are hurt unexpectedly, (*c*) when you are prevented from doing something you want to. The logical outcome of this is that it is not the central figure that makes the fun, but the environment. Almost all other comedians have produced comedy by the interaction between environment and a highly characterised personality; the environment may or may not be ordinary, the comedian is always extraordinary.

Given these things, another principle follows. Though it may be true that a man slipping upon a banana skin is funny, one cannot build a film on this episode alone. The principle holds, but the detail must vary. So we early find Harold Lloyd using armies of gagmen to create the banana skin episodes. His films depend on one banana skin after another, so to speak, yet one must not interfere with the environment. It would be fatal to the comedy if the banana skins were anything more than accidental litter on the pavement. We must be able to say in any given circumstance, "that might have happened to me".

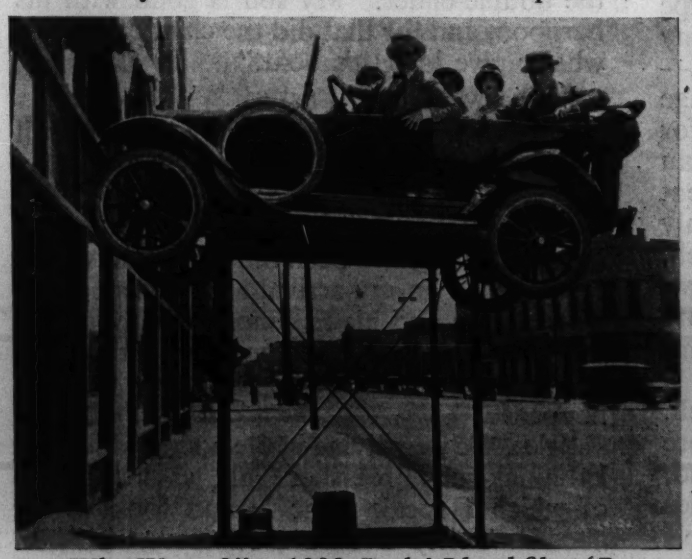
LLOYD'S films have always stood alone in their sense of craftsmanship, in their splendid sense of continuity, in their sense of shape (often elementary, but very clear and definite). This super attention to detail of craftmanship must have been forced on Lloyd the moment he began to manufacture fun instead of applying the creative inspiration of genius. Look at any Chaplin film. The internal construction of a sequence is often brilliant, but the shape of the whole film and the standard of craftsmanship is often poor. The film stands or falls by Chaplin himself. Not so Lloyd.

There are disadvantages in the cold-blooded manufacture of comedy. It is easy to build the skeleton, hard to drape it with a solid body. This is only too true of Harold Lloyd. After the first fine silent efforts, *Safety Last*, *Sailormade Man*, *For Heaven's Sake* the joints began to creak, till, when one reached *College Days*, the fun was almost lost in the pain and hurts Lloyd received.

But Harold Lloyd managed to redrape his skeleton and survive. Few comedians change once they have found their form. Chaplin is obviously interested only in perpetuating the Chaplin film as we knew it ten years ago. Keaton, baffled by sound, disappeared from the screen. So did Langdon. Harold Lloyd and Stan Laurel managed almost alone among comedians to bridge the gap from silence to sound. (Stan Laurel has been making comedies by himself ever since I can remember; Hardy only joined him just before talkies started.) Harold Lloyd has not only survived, he has flowered into something new with the advent of talkies. That is one of the advantages of making something by machine; you can change the style of your goods to suit the market. You need not be bothered by artistic temperament. So Harold Lloyd has given himself a new character. It is machine-made like all the other things about his films, but none the less efficient for that. He has developed a bashfulness, since the days of *Girl Shy*, till it fits him like a glove. To-day, he has honour and chivalry which he never had before.

His most recent film is *Professor Beware*. Harold Lloyd is at his best. The skeleton of his comedy is there for you to see if you look for it. But it is so well draped that we can almost believe that the waxwork has life. *Professor Beware* is a brilliant achievement of machine-made comedy. And in this case, to make the waxwork even more convincing, it is surrounded by minor characters which are alive and vivid. The two hoboes whom he picks up belong to the finest traditions of personal comedy.

You will be a cynical picture-goer if you can sit through *Professor Beware* and not like it nearly as much as the finest inspired comedy of Laurel and Hardy. Nearly as much, but not quite as much, I hope.



"Why Worry?" a 1923 Pathé Lloyd film. (By kind permission of Studio Ltd., from Paul Rotha's "Movie Parade.")

"Professor Beware" (Paramount).

A WHALER GOES DOWN . .

by

Robert Flaherty

(who made 'Nanook', 'Moana', 'White Shadows', 'Tabu' and 'Elephant Boy')

"Nanook of the North"

LEAVING the tumult of McLeod's swarming post site, I walked along the rocky tide mark. Not far away I came upon a whale-boat drawn up on shore. It was a twenty-five-foot double-ender built of oak. Evidently it was a present from some whaling captain to one of his Eskimo harpooneers. Near by stood three topeks. Sitting before one I saw an old Eskimo who was apparently too feeble to help with the post-building.

"Chimo!" I called to him.

"Good-day, capitan! Good-day, good-day!" was his startling reply.

"What, you speak English?" I exclaimed. "All good whaler mans him speak English," he said, smiling.

He was a typical whaler Eskimo, a type never seen in Ungava, but found in many places along the coast of Baffin Land—Fair Ness; Frobisher Gulf; the Savage Islands and Cumberland Sound—where for more than a century Scottish and American whalers have recruited Eskimos to supplement their crews. The whalers take aboard not only the Eskimo men, but their families as well. Thus fifteen men, an average whaler's crew, may be complemented by as many as seventy souls. Of course all the Eskimo's hunting impedimenta, his kayaks and sledges and a veritable army of dogs go with him as well. The whaler's cruise may last a year or more before the Eskimo is returned to his own land, and the cruise may range a thousand miles over the northerly arms of the Bay—Rowe's Welcome, the Frozen Strait, Repulse Bay, Fury and Hecla Strait, and the ice-beset Foxe Channel.

"Yes," said the old Eskimo, "my grandfather before me was a whaler and my father too; and myself, I have been a whaler all my days and I am now an old man. My son is a whaler, and there lies his boat." He pointed to the double-ender. "My son is good with his harpoon, and for that did the chief of the last whaler give him this boat."

"Who was that?" I asked.

"It was the Yankee who was lost with all his crew in the sea off Cape Wolstenholme last year."

"What!" I exclaimed. The disaster he referred to must have been the one about which I had heard on my arrival at Wolstenholme, when Bruce and his Eskimos had thought at first that I could be no other than a survivor of the same disaster. "Were you there when it happened?"

"Yes. We were living in the noona which the kablunak calls Frobisher Gulf, when this ship of which I speak came in and took us all aboard. Thirty-five we numbered, with our children, and besides we had our dogs and kayaks and topeks and sledges, and a walrus-skin omiak for our women.

"We started through the straits bound for Rowe's Welcome and Repulse Bay. We had much ice coming through the straits. Sometimes we were going from the north coast to the south coast, and then to the north coast again. Sometimes we were only going back. We were never getting very far through the straits because of all the ice. There were times when for many days we did not move at all, so thick was the ice. Sometimes when the ice showed signs of opening and the kablunak could get the omiak into the lanes of open water, all of us, men, women and children, would be out on the ice with a long rope as thick as my arm, and we would be hauling the omiak and it would be following us, coming very slow.

"It took us nearly two moons to get into the western end of the straits, and then one evening we came very near an island and we wanted to land on this island, for we had seen on it some bear, and we wanted to get some fresh water for the omiak as well.

"The sea had no wind, though it was heaving, and in a small time the darkness would come. Then while we were going the nose of

the omiak struck something. It was a reef, and over this reef the nose of the omiak rose high out of the water. Then the nose stopped rising, and when we looked we could see the red bottom of the omiak. At the stern the deck nearly touched the water.

"The chief of the omiak now spit his words as he always did when he was angry, and he told us to lower our boats and take our women and children and our dogs to the island.

"'We will have to wait for the high tide,' the chief of the omiak said, 'before we can get off, and then in the morning when we get off you can all come on board again.'

"We went to the island and we found driftwood and we made a fire, and there was fish to be caught, and someone killed a seal. We feasted and we looked out at the omiak with its nose so high in the air and its stern so near the water, and its big sticks and its cross-sticks all leaning far over. It was helpless, like a whale when it is stranded.

"The night came, and it was black, for there was no moon. We lay down in the open and soon everyone was asleep, and there were only a few coals still glowing at our fire, and off in the distance there were the small eyes of the omiak shining through the blackness.

"And now while I was beginning to go to sleep I could hear a low moan, and this moan was the wind. I wet my finger with my mouth, and I held it up, and the way the wind was coming was the bad way, for it came right on to where the omiak hung with its nose so high upon that reef. Quick then came an angry wind and it scattered the ashes from the dying fire, and by the time we were on our feet and our eyes were open wide we were in the thick of a wind that was beginning to be a storm.

"We got our kayaks to the water with our women helping and we went out to the omiak, but even now with the heave that was growing in the sea more and more the nose of the omiak was going up and coming down hard upon that reef, and the big sticks and the cross-sticks would shake. 'Look out!' we said to one another. 'The big sticks may fall.'

"Quick the seas grew, and we had to leave or we could not land upon the island. 'Are you not all coming ashore?' we asked the chief of the omiak, but he did not hear us, for with a lantern he was looking over the sides first on one side and then on the other, and on both of these sides there were pieces of wood and splinters of wood at which he looked, and they floated upon the water.

"We got to our island just in time, and even then if our women had not gone to their waists in the water to help, our kayaks would have been broken.

"Soon the seas were running wild and smashing on our island, and out where the omiak was we could hear it going up and going down. The kablunak had put a light on the deck, and by this light we could see all the omiak, and its ropes trembled and its sticks shook, and the omiak rolled in jerks one way and then the other like a man who has much pain, and always it was going up and going down.

" 'The tide is rising,' we said to one another, 'but the wind comes the bad way, and only farther up on the rocks can the omiak drive.' And it was so, and we could hear sometimes above the shrieks of the wind the groans of the omiak. 'Truly,' said our women, 'it is dying'.

"And all the time the storm grew, and then the big light the kablunaks had put on deck went out, and now only the small eyes of the omiak could we see through the blackness of that storm.

"And now while we listened to the dying of the omiak we began to hear yells from the kablunaks and they were louder even than the shrieks of the storm, and some of these yells came from the bow and some came from high up in the rigging and some came from the stern. And while we listened and watched through the blackness we saw a flash in the bow and then another in the stern, and soon there were more and more of these flashes from the bow and from the stern, and we could hear them too, for they were guns."

"Do you mean to say they were shooting each other?" I asked.

"Yes," the old man nodded.

"Had there been trouble between the chief kablunak and his crew?"

"Yes," the old man said again, "there was one big man and he was always with the chief of the omiak, and he had big hands when they were closed, and his hair was thick and it was not straight, but curled. Pretty hair, our women called it. And in his ears were round yellow rings, and his nose was more funny still, so long it was the end of it almost touched his beard. He was all teeth when he smiled, but when he was angry he was then all teeth too. It was he who was always with the chief of the omiak whenever the chief of the omiak had trouble with his crew. No one of the crew liked him, but no one of the crew was half so strong. 'Maybe it is for him there is this shooting,' we said to one another.

"Many times was there shooting from the bow and shooting from the stern, but at last there was only shooting from high up in the sticks, for one by one the eyes of the omiak had been going out. We knew then that the omiak was sinking.

"We could hear no more firing and we could hear no more yells, for even the sticks were going down. Soon all that was left was one light on top of the highest of the sticks. And now we could hear only the shrieks of the storm. All at once this one light made one swift move across the blackness, and as it moved there was a sound like a deep breath, and this one light was gone.

"For a long time we were watching and we listened, but all we could hear was the anger of the seas, the wailing of our women and the shrieks of that storm."

The old man lapsed into silence.

"WERE you long on the island?" I asked him after a respectful pause.

"We were caught on this island for four moons," he said, "for soon after the ice came and this ice was never still, but always moving so that we could not walk over it to the land. Most of our hunting things went down with the omiak, and though there were among us three guns we did not have many cartridges, and those that we had were soon used up. There were no deer on this island, for it was small, and no herds of walrus, only seal which were hard to get, so much was the ice round us always moving. On bear, we lived most. There were many bear as there are when the ice is always moving."

"But how did you kill them if all your heavy spears had gone down on the omiak?" I wanted to know.

"By bow and arrow that we made from pieces of the omiak that floated to us after it went down. See, here is one."

Reaching into his tent he fetched forth a bow. He had made it from a stave of an oak cask which had floated in from the wreck. Not only was the wood poor material for a bow, but it was hardly the length of my arm.

"With bows as small as this you killed the bear?"

"Ae."

"And the bows of all the others were as small as this?"

"Ae."

WHILE the old man was rambling on I heard a tell-tale tinkle. It was the maiden with the double row of pennies. She walked into the skin tent.

"Your daughter?" I asked.

"Ae," he replied proudly.

The maiden, with a blush, held out her hand. "Chimo!" she said, smiling. Then, kneeling, she lifted a bearskin robe from the floor of the topek and from under it pulled out a box. It was whaler-built, I could see, for it was made of teak, bound with brass.

She flipped open the lid, brought out a looking-glass and rearranged her hair like any lady of fashion. Then she replaced the mirror in the box, closed down the lid, put the box under the robe again, and hurriedly tinkled out toward the building post. She walked not unlike a penguin, the long tail of her kooletah flapping against her heels at every step.

I was curious about the box. "Let me see it," I asked the old man. He brought it out and placed it in my hand.

"The big man gave it," he said.

"Who?"

"The big man. The big man with the rings in his ears and the long nose and the many teeth."

I knew now that he was referring to the foundered Yankee whaler. "Oh, yes!" You mean the man all the shooting was about."

"Yes, him."

I looked at the lid. On it, crudely painted, was a floral piece of tiny blue flowers. Under them ran the legend:

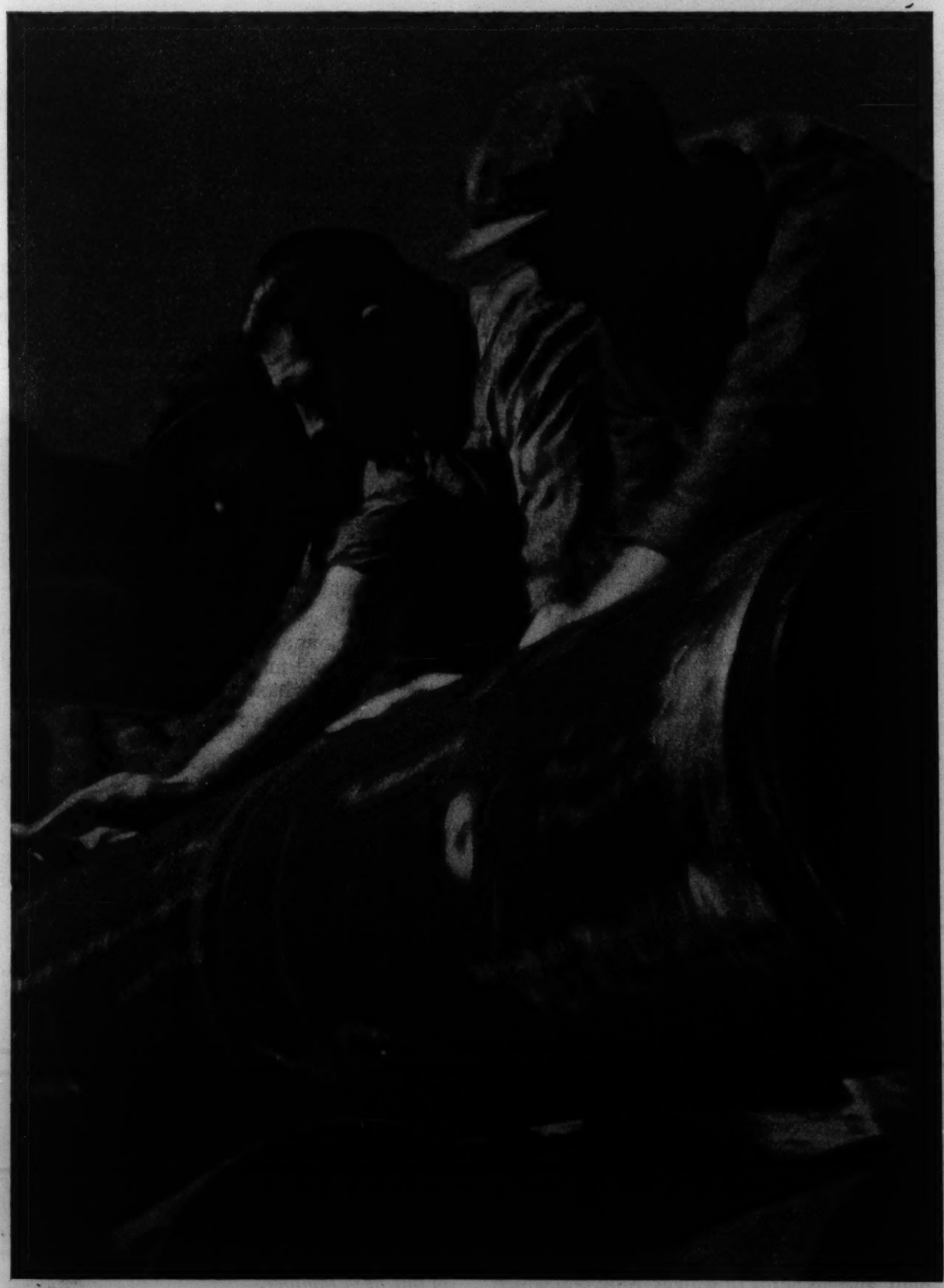
"Forget-me-not!"

★ ★ ★

This extract from Robert Flaherty's 'The Captain's Chair' is made by permission of Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, the Publishers. The book will be reviewed by John Grierson in our next number.

OIL from the EARTH

Its evolution from medicine to motive power told by film



ON the banks of the Allegheny River, in 1848, an American named Samuel Kier was drilling a salt well when, to his embarrassment, at a depth of 400 feet he struck oil. Discovering that this oil had "wonderful medical virtues" he bottled it for sale "in its natural state without any preparation or admixture". In the window of a New York drug-store an American business man named George Bissell saw an advertisement put out by Kier bearing a drawing of the derrick he used for salt drilling and describing how he came to strike oil. Bissell had an idea, and in 1858 he engaged an ex-railroad conductor named Edward Drake to set up a similar derrick on some land he had bought in Pennsylvania and to drill, not for salt, but for oil and not for medicinal purposes but for lighting lamps. Drake and a local blacksmith started work to the amusement and scepticism of the inhabitants. At 36 feet they hit rock and were only able to drill 3 feet a day, but they carried on. On August 27th, 1859, they struck oil, 69½ feet below the surface. Within a few months the population round the well had increased from a few hundred to tens of thousands, and wells were being drilled throughout the district.

The world needed oil in large supplies and better qualities for lubricating machines and for lighting factories and houses. Animal oils and fats were inadequate to meet the demands created by the rapid and steady growth of mechanical industries and urban population during the nineteenth century. In England in 1850, when a Scots chemist named James Young discovered how to produce oil for these purposes from Scottish shale, the price of animal lamp-oil stood at 6*s.* to 8*s.* a gallon in spite of the increased supplies made available by extensions of the whaling industry. Young's lamp-oil cost only 1*s.* 6*d.* a gallon and his process was developed in other countries where deposits of shale and other bituminous coals were found or could be imported. But it was Drake's demonstration that oil could be obtained from the earth by drilling that was to solve the problems of his time and to lead to those uses of oil which have, in the twentieth century, effected a revolution as great as that effected at the end of the eighteenth century by the steam-engine and the steam locomotive.

Drake's drilling for mineral oil and the beginnings of the oil industry in America have been depicted in fictional form in Mamoulian's *High, Wide and Handsome*, while *Paraffin Young*, recently made by the Realist Film Unit, tells the story of James Young's discoveries and of the modern Scottish oil industry which is based on his work. *Oil from the Earth* (produced by Arthur Elton and directed by D'Arcy Cartwright, with music by Ernst Meyer), gives an account of modern drilling for oil, and relates it to the rest of the operations by which oil is discovered, produced and made available in all parts of the world. It presents also a picture of the kind of skilled workmanship, scientific knowledge and complex organisation on which the modern world depends.

Without petrol for motor cars and aeroplanes, fuel oil for ships, and lubricating oils for every kind of machine from watches to turbines, the industry, transport and commerce

of the modern world would stand still. By these and hundreds of other oil-products—kerosene for lamps and agricultural tractors, paraffin-wax for candles, asphalt and bitumen for roads, and oils, spirits and waxes used in the manufacture of paints, rubbers, printers' inks, explosives, fruit-sprays, scents and cosmetics—the ways in which men and women throughout the world live and work have been fundamentally changed. This is as true of Europe and North America, in which the uses of mineral oil marked another stage in developments initiated by steam-driven machines, as of countries like India and China in which, at the time of the discovery of mineral oil, the mass of the people had hardly been directly aware of western industrialisation and civilisation. In every country social, economic and political habits and traditions have been changed during the present century by the use of oil. For the city worker who can get out into the country every night and at the week-end by car; for the district nurse serving a scattered rural population; for the farmer and farm worker living miles from a market town and a railway station or working against the weather; the fireman on an oil-fuelled ship who knew what it was like to stoke a coal-fuelled ship; for the Afghan woman going to a town in a bus; for the Indian peasant whose day is prolonged after sunset by the oil-lamp—oil has meant new and better ways of living. All of us are no less affected by it, directly and indirectly, although we may never give the matter a thought.

TO-DAY the world uses in a year some 250,000,000 tons of oil obtained from the earth by drilling. Most of it comes from the oil-fields in the U.S.A., Venezuela, Mexico, the U.S.S.R., Iran, Irak and the Dutch East Indies. Wells have been drilled in the foothills of barren mountainous regions, in tropical forests and deserts, and even in the sea. In all parts of the world the search for new fields is being carried on and new wells are being drilled (wells have been drilled as deep as 15,000 feet), so that supplies of this mineral which has become essential to the modern world shall be maintained, and increased as the demand increases.

Mineral oil is usually found deep in the earth, trapped, not in underground lakes, but in porous rocks like sponge which were originally formed as sediments at the bottom of seas and estuaries. It is now widely agreed by scientists (although an entirely opposite theory is also maintained) that mineral oil was formed by the decomposition of the remains of fishes, animals and plants, of microscopic and larger types, which were buried in the mud millions of years ago. These remains were covered by layer after layer of earth and were changed by great pressure and heat into oil. Movements of the earth's crust, followed by erosion, have sometimes resulted in oil being forced up and seeping to the surface but for the most part the oil is buried deep in the earth. Surveyors on the ground and from the air, geologists and geophysicists, work together to discover regions in which oil is likely to be found. But the only certain method of proving the existence of oil is by drilling. When the scientists have done their best, then the drillers begin their work.

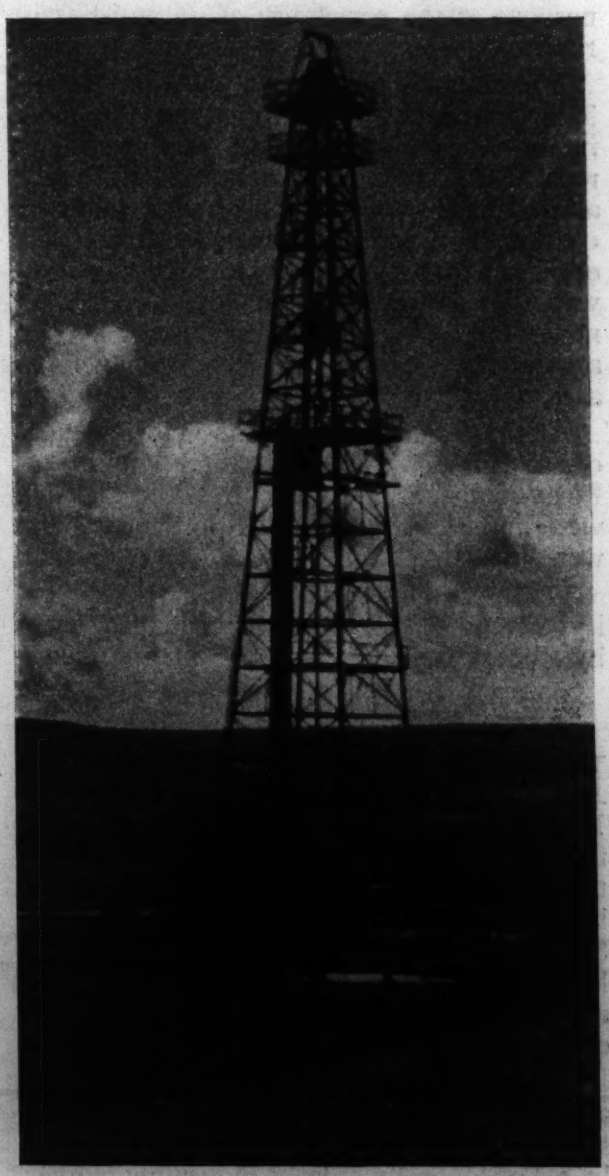
First a tall, steel derrick is erected, sometimes 140 feet high, to carry the tackle which raises and lowers the drill and the casing for the hole. To-day, most drilling is done by means of rotary drills, rotating at one to three revolutions a second, which bore into the earth and rock as a gimlet bores into wood. Drilling-bits of various designs and alloys are used for different types of earth formation, and the driller must be quick to detect a change in the formation, so that he can change the bit. At every thirty feet, the drill is stopped and raised from the hole and a section of steel casing pipe, up which the oil will flow, is inserted into the hole and cemented there. Then the drill is again lowered to the bottom of the hole inside the steel casing and drilling continues. The diameter of the hole at the top is kept as wide as possible and may be as much as 21 to 26 inches across; as the depth increases the diameter decreases, perhaps to as little as 4 inches. All the while drilling goes on, mud, carefully prepared at the surface to the right consistency, is pumped under pressure into the hole. This keeps the drilling bit cool, strengthens the sides of the hole so that they do not cave in, and prevents the oil and gas, when they are reached, escaping from the oil-bearing rocks into the hole. As the mud is forced back to the surface it brings with it cuttings of rock from the bottom of the hole. These are washed, taken to the field laboratory and examined. From these cuttings it is possible for the driller to see what kind of formation he is working through, and for the geologist to map out the earth below. For the same purposes solid cores of rock are at intervals taken from the hole and examined. Again at regular intervals, the driller lowers an instrument into the hole to discover whether it is being bored in a straight line. Foot by foot, perhaps over a period of several months, drilling continues. Successful drilling depends on the skill and experience of the drillers and the field scientists. At last, if oil is present, signs of the gas which is always present with oil appear. The driller attaches to the top of the casing a fitting containing several pipes with exit valves, known as a "Christmas Tree" because its arms look like the branches of such a tree. The cable carrying the string of drilling tools passes inside the vertical stem of the "Christmas Tree" and drilling continues. The stratum containing oil under high pressure can now be penetrated in safety since the upward rush of gas and oil can be controlled by the valves.

Oil usually flows up the steel casing under its own pressure. The flow is led away, under control, by pipes to great storage tanks. When the oil is flowing satisfactorily the derrick is taken down. Oil is often found miles, sometimes hundreds of miles, away from the sea and any other means of transport. Pipe-lines are then laid from the field to refineries and ports, sometimes across hundreds of miles of desert. The crude oil is pumped through the pipes into storage tanks. From these some crude oil is shipped straight into tankers to be carried to refineries in other countries, but most of it is refined in the country of origin, before being transported abroad.

Crude oil, as it comes out of the earth, is a complex mixture of hydrocarbons, containing also small quantities of oxygen, sulphur and nitrogen compounds, earthy material and dissolved gas. Such a mixture is of no use for the purposes for which we require oil. In the refineries the mixture is separated into simpler mixtures and purified. From the refineries come petrol, kerosene, fuel oil, paraffin wax, lubricating oils, solvent spirits and hundreds of other products. In specially constructed tankers of some 10,000 tons they are carried to the ports of the world.

This is the story behind the petrol pump as it is told in *Oil from the Earth*. Every effort has been made to tell it accurately and vividly. For the sequences on the origins and discovery of oil-bearing formations use has been made of diagrams specially drawn for the film and of reconstructions in the Science Museum. While the main portion of the film presents in detail a complex technical process, the film is not an essay in the portrayal of photogenic machinery. Its object is to explain and its attitude is human. Behind the petrol-pump stand not only derricks, drills, pipelines and tankers, but the men who make and use them. It is in terms of the geologist, the driller, the chemist, the engineer, the tanker captain and the ordinary labourer, each doing his own job, that this film tells its story.

William Farr



The Derrick (*Oil from the Earth*)

Valentino and Vilma Banky in "The Son of the Sheik"

The Sheik Rides Again

The life and death of Rudolph Valentino, star of the silent screen

THE shadow of a ghost rules London's movie-land.

The news of Paramount's intended life of Rudolph Valentino, and that revivals of his films have packed houses in the States, is followed by the revival in London of two Valentino successes—*The Sheik* and *The Son of the Sheik*—in two of London's snootiest cinemas.

Rudolph Valentino—who was Rudolph Valentino?

Even to-day the anniversary of his death is remembered by thousands of women who pay homage to his memory.

In Britain, there is still a Valentino club, dedicated to his memory. News of his death on August 26th, 1926, brought incredible grief-scenes on two continents. Besides the milling crowds at services and shows, there were suicides: a London dancer swallowed poison—a New York mother shot herself on a heap of Valentino pictures.

When his body lay on show in New York's biggest undertaking establishment, crowds of several thousands tried to get into the place where the body lay. Police reinforcements were summoned. A large plate-glass window of the establishment was broken, ten persons being cut by the falling glass. Mounted police charged the crowd. Militant members of the crowd rubbed soap on the pavements to make the police horses slip and fall. It was a large scale riot.

Round the coffin was a Fascist guard, nervous at the possibility of an anti-Fascist raid.

The actual funeral took place on August 30th, the delay being to enable the more important mourners from Hollywood to reach New York. They included Pola Negri, alleged fiancée of Valentino, who collapsed on the coffin and afterwards declared to the eager newspapermen: "My love for Valentino was the greatest love of my life. I shall never forget him. I loved him not as one artiste loves another, but as a woman loves a man."

At the funeral held in the actors' chapel of a Roman Catholic church, on West Forty-ninth Street, five hundred friends were admitted. A hundred thousand people were outside.

What was the secret of Valentino's popularity? It has never since been equalled, even by Robert Taylor.

RUDOLPH VALENTINO was one of three children. He was born on May 6th, 1895, in a small Italian village. The death of his father, when Rudolph was eleven, depleted the family finances. At the age of eighteen, he set off to see Paris. There, according to Stanley Walker, he went in for so much hell-raising that his mother sent word that, as he undoubtedly would come to a bad end, he might as well go to the United States.

He arrived in New York with little English and less money. He worked first as a landscape gardener. Then he washed dishes. In his off-time, he dressed in evening clothes and went visiting the swell resorts of New York. With a touch of the gigolo about him, it was at this time, according to Stanley Walker, that he got on to the New York Police Records as a petty thief and a blackmailer. Such facts were never widely known and in any case would never have been believed by his movie fans.

He then became a dancing partner with Joan Sawyer, went on the stage in Musical Comedy and finally, when his company was left stranded, went to Hollywood.

Here, he wandered about playing small parts for years.

Rex Ingram, in his day ace director, told how at some function or another he saw Valentino. "I was attracted at once to Valentino's face and by his remarkable grace of movement . . . . 'There is a fellow', thought I, 'who would be great in pictures' . . . . When *The Four Horsemen* came along, I thought of him immediately."

In his lean years, Valentino did a deal of extra work. Among his roles, he played the villain in *Out of Luck* and a sinister Italian Count in *The Married Virgin*. During this time, too, he met and married Jean Acker, from whom, within two years, he was seeking divorce. In March, 1922, he received an interlocutory decree from Miss Acker, agreeing to pay her £2,400 alimony. With the part of Julio in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, he began the climb to stardom.

Out of the *Four Horsemen* rose the Valentino of world fame; the embodiment of male glamour, the richly romantic figure upon which women lavished adoration.

Then followed *The Sheik*, and soon America and England were singing and whistling:

I'm the Sheik of Araby
Your love belongs to me.
At night when you're asleep,
Into your tent I creep.

Fan letters began coming in by hundreds and thousands. His salary rose from £70 a week to £140 then to £200.

During this time he met Natacha Rambova, the daughter of a New York perfumer. Though under the terms of his decree he was not free to remarry until March, 1923, Valentino was in a hurry, and they married. He was prosecuted for bigamy and held under the £2,000 bail.

The case was eventually dropped, but Valentino quarrelled with his employer and went East to New York. An injunction prevented him from filming for any other company.

He went dancing again in a sponsored show, earning well over £1,000 a week. It was during this time that he wrote his two books: "How You Can Keep Fit" and a book of poems called "Day Dreams", which his wife, Natacha, claimed were psychically received.

Valentino patched up his difficulties with his film producers and made *The Young Rajah* and *Blood and Sand*, the latter being a success not only with the women but with young men, as was seen by the sudden fashion in side-whiskers and other imitations of toreador Valentino.

He followed these two pictures with *Cobra*.

By 1925, he was getting £40,000 a picture and fifty per cent. of the profits. His income that year was estimated at £200,000. His next two pictures were for United Artists *The Eagle*, *Monsieur Beaucaire* and, his last, *The Son of the Sheik*.

It seems that Valentino and wife Natacha had artistic ambitions. "Both Rudi and I", explains Natacha, "were dreamers and too artistically ambitious. He was as great a worshipper at the shrine of beauty as I was. We both took for our model Douglas Fairbanks, whose great business ability and commercial sense, together with his artistic appreciation and fearlessness forms a combination difficult to equal."

With the eyes of Rudi and Natacha focused on Douglas Fairbanks, then making such films as *The Black Pirate*, Natacha exclaims: "Why should Rudi always be held under the hand of the great iron god of commerce?"

The thought of Valentino following the footsteps of Douglas Fairbanks is an intriguing one. But this gives an insight into Valentino's outlook on life, and, cynics would say, explains much of his popularity with women. He, it seems, worshipped at the shrine of the strong, silent man. He once wrote to a critic "hoping I will have an opportunity to demonstrate to you that the wrist under the slave bracelet may snap a real fist into your sagging jaw". His troubles with Natacha were, we are told, due to his belief in the masterful role of the man and the subservient place of the woman. For Rudi the woman's place was in the home.

Natacha Rambova was divorced from Valentino in 1925, and this time Pola Negri announced their engagement, though Valentino himself never confirmed this.

In 1926, having finished *The Son of The Sheik*, he started east and spent three weeks in New York, loafing around. He paid £20 for a shaving brush, and then just before noon on August 15th, Valentino gasped, clutched at his side and fainted. He was taken to the Polyclinic hospital in an ambulance and operated on by four members of the medical profession, bowed down with their responsibility, for appendicitis and gastric ulcers.

Reports of his illness brought visits and calls from such notabilities as Jimmy Walker, Pola Negri, Marion Davies, and Charlie Chaplin. There were more than a thousand telegrams. An enquiry booth was set up in the hospital lobby. Private detectives were hired to check gate-crashers. Aeroplanes brought serum and cure-alls from far-off admirers. Crowds waited outside the hospital.

The newspapers held the presses. A priest was summoned and, at ten minutes after noon, on August 23rd, Valentino died. Outside, the huge crowds blocked the traffic.

This was by no means the last of Rudi.

Both he and Natacha practised spiritualism and Natacha reported herself in touch with him almost as soon as he passed away. It seems that Rudi was present at his own funeral and that his first messages were said to be unhappy and incoherent, because of "his resentment at having been taken at the height of his career."

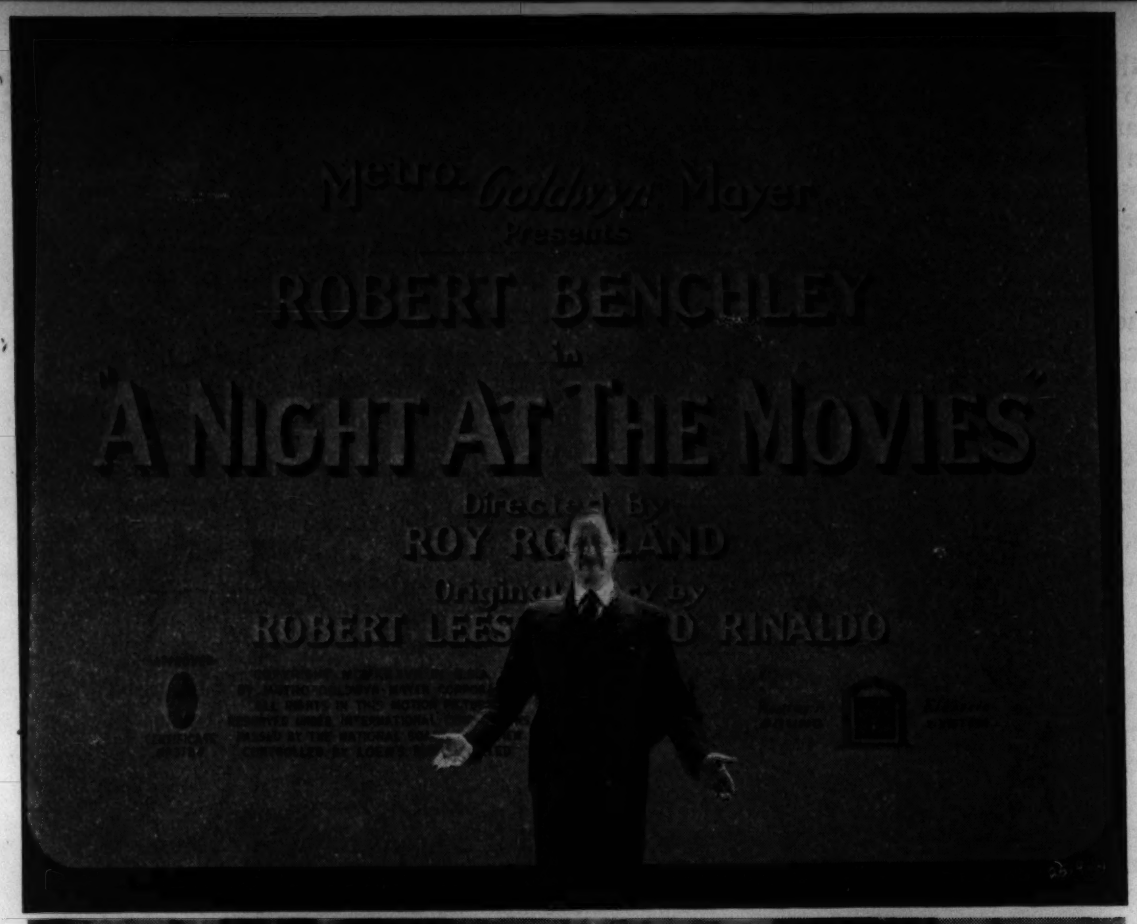
But he settled down "Thank heaven," he said, "I was always adaptable to my surroundings. This faculty stands me in good stead here."

It seems he found solace in heavenly theatricals in which he was able to play with such giants of the stage as Henry Irving and Sarah Bernhardt and with his movie forerunner Wallace Reid, "though the parts they have given me at first are small."

He found acting under the new circumstances rather different from what he had known previously: "On the earth, the clever artist could portray any part given him by a manager. Not so here. There is no mere cleverness here. All is sincerity."

Now the ghost of a ghost returns to mock with strange triumphs the efforts of a floundering film industry to maintain public support. In *The Sheik* Valentino leers, grimaces and romances in a way strange to the sophisticated movie audiences of to-day. But yet, in spite of the naïveté of the titles and the over-emphasis of the acting, one feels that there is more of real movie in these strange figures of the past than in the eyebrow-raising, talkie-talkie tuxedos of the present-day, streamlined cinema. R.C.

"The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"



A NIGHT at the MOVIES

with Robert Benchley

Robert Benchley introduces the Film: We have only ten minutes now before the next picture goes on, so we'll have to get this over and done with. As you probably all know, the title of this picture is *A Night at the Movies.* And now we are going to try to present some of the problems that concern the everyday movie-goer, and to suggest remedies for them possibly, or possibly not suggest remedies for them, but in general—oh, well, you'll see, anyway.

* * *

Robert Benchley and his girl friend are choosing their picture.

Benchley: Well, now, let's see. At the Myrtle Eye, there's "The Third Glove." It says it's the best show in Town.

Girl: I've seen that. But I don't mind seeing it again, if you haven't.

Benchley: No, no. There's no sense in sitting through it a second time. The Willett is showing "Souls on a Tandem."

Girl: What's the picture with it?

Benchley: "The Case of the Missing Milkman."

Girl: We can miss that. But I hear "Souls on a Tandem" is good.

Benchley: Yes. It is. I saw it last week. I'd just as soon see it again, though.

Girl: Oh, no! There's no use your sitting through it a second time. What's at the Beekman?

Benchley: Beekman—Beekman—Beekman—Beekman—"Free Parking."

Girl: Is that the name of the picture?

Benchley: No. "Souls on a Tandem."

Girl: Aw, I wish you hadn't seen that.

Benchley: I'd just as soon—I'd—In fact, I'd like to see it again.

Girl: No, no. We won't see "Souls on a Tandem." You've already seen it once.

But they do go to "Souls on a Tandem."

Benchley: What's—what's on now, please?

Ticket Seller: How many, please?

Benchley: Is the—is the feature—is the feature on now?
Ticket Seller: If you go in now, you can see a complete show. How many, please?
Benchley: Two, please.
Girl: Find out what's on.
Benchley: Is the feature on in the middle yet?
Ticket Seller: Which one? Next, please.
Benchley; to waiting man: I beg your pardon?
Man: Three, please.
Girl: Come on, come on. We won't get a seat.

Benchley and the girl leave the ticket-box only to be called back by a tap on the glass, by the Ticket Seller.

Ticket Seller: You forgot your change.
Benchley; laughing: Forgot my money.

He rejoins the girl and they go through a door.

Girl: Did you find out what's on?
Benchley: No. I didn't ask her. I wouldn't give her the satisfaction.

The Doorman takes Benchley's tickets and returns the stubs to Benchley.

Benchley: Here—I had only two tickets.
Doorman: These two are for the automobile.
Benchley: My automobile is outside.
Doorman: These are for the drawing on the free auto. Just drop the stubs in the foyer, please.
Benchley: Sounds okay.

As they pass through the foyer, Benchley takes off his topcoat. They look at the car on display, and Benchley drops the ticket stubs in the box.

Usherette: Straight ahead, please.

They go into the cinema Benchley taking off his scarf, which he drops and then picks up. Inside the cinema, he turns right.

Usherette: To your left, please, to your left.
Benchley: My mistake, sorry.
Another Usherette: Aisle Three, to your left.
Benchley: I guess I got out of the wrong side of the bed this morning.
Usherette: Tickets, please.

Benchley hands her the stubs. She looks at them and hands them back.

Usherette: I am sorry, sir, but these are for the automobile. Would you drop them in the box in the foyer?
Benchley: Oh, I guess I dropped in the wrong stubs.
Usherette: Just a moment, please. Oh, Mr. Pennerley!

Mr. Pennerly comes forward, takes the stubs and looks at them.

Usherette: This gentleman hasn't any tickets.
Benchley; laughing: I dropped them in the automobile box.
Pennerly: Well, I am sorry, Sir, but you're not eligible to win the automobile unless you drop those stubs in the box.
Benchley: But I don't want to win the automobile. I just want to see the movie.
Pennerly: Well, if you didn't want to win the automobile, why did you take the stubs?
Benchley: I didn't take the stubs—well, I took the stubs, sure. But I didn't know I was taking them.
Pennerly: Just a moment, please. Oh, Mr. Bomm!
Mr. Bomm comes forward: Excuse me please.

Mr. Bomm and Mr. Pennerly engage in a whispered conversation.

Benchley: I remember when all this was just a skating rink.
Girl: For all I've seen it well might be.

Bomm comes forward to speak to Benchley.

Mr. Bomm: Now, then, you haven't any tickets at all, eh?
Benchley: Only these.
Mr. Bomm: But these tickets are for—
Bomm and Benchley: The automobile.
Girl: Would it help any if I said I saw him drop the other ones into the box?
Mr. Bomm: Well, Miss, it's slightly irregular, but . . .

He passes them on.

* * *

They are now sitting in the theatre. Benchley is holding his hat, scarf, and coat on his lap.

A boy in the next seat is staring at Benchley and continues staring at him all the time Benchley and the girl are in the seats.

A fat man enters the seats directly in front of Benchley. The fat man moves to the right. Benchley moves his head to the left. A man at the back of Benchley moves his head to the right. The boy is still staring at Benchley.

Benchley moves to the right, the man at the back of him moves forward and speaks.

Man: Would you mind holding still a minute? I want to get a general idea of what this picture is about.

The boy is still staring at Benchley, who, after speaking to the girl, rises.

Benchley: There are some better seats down front.
Girl: Aren't these all right?

Benchley makes his way past seated people, and the girl follows. A man rises to let them pass, starts to sit down again, falls from the seat.

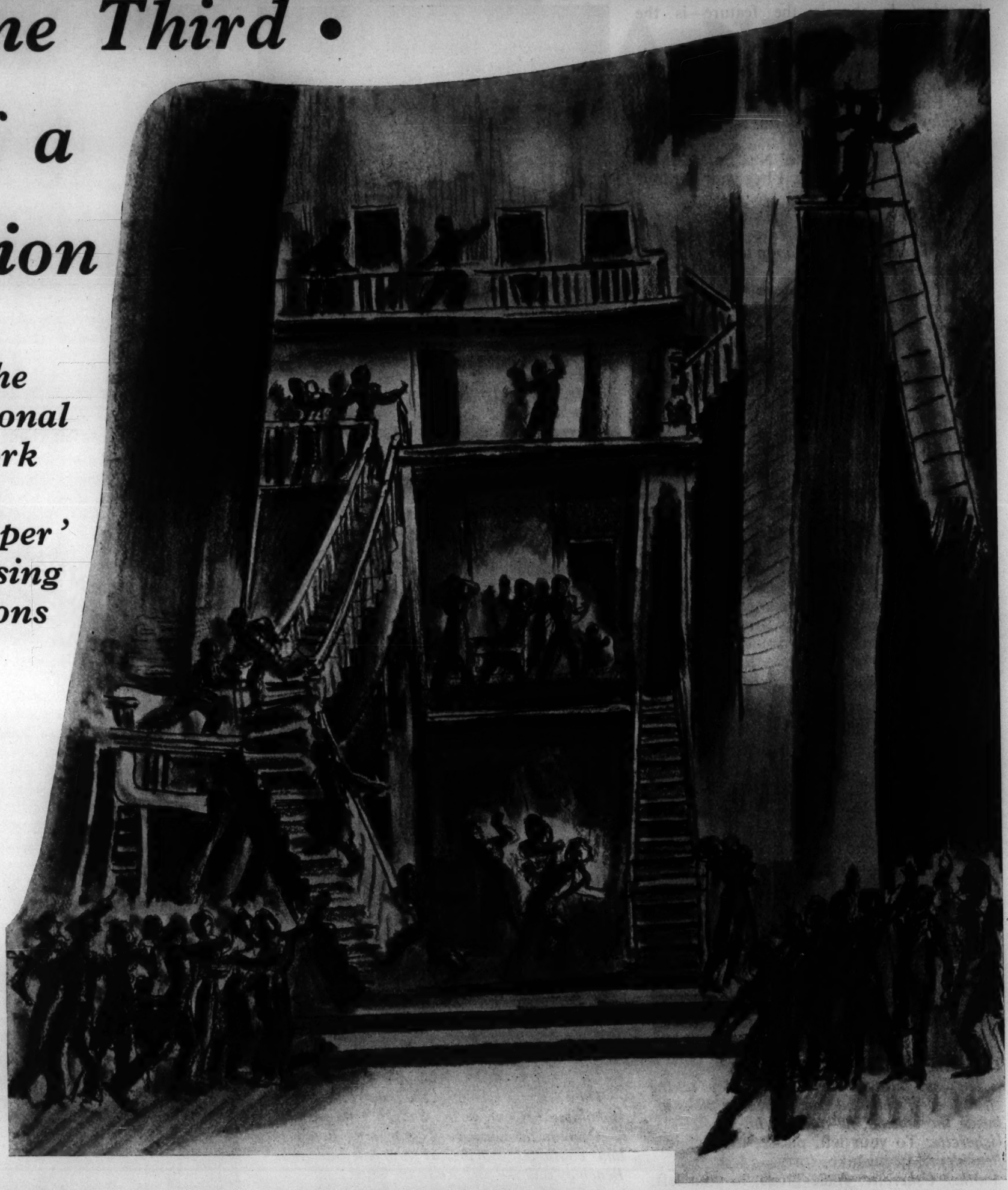
Benchley: Sorry.

Benchley and the girl go along another row, Benchley dragging the sleeve of his coat over the heads of the people in the next row. Just as they reach the two seats a man and woman rush in and take them. They eventually find their way to two aisle seats. These are at an extreme angle, and after straining left and right and squinting, Benchley takes a packet of mints out of his pocket, eats one and coughs. The coughing continues and he eventually gets up and goes to the door marked "Exit". He goes through the door, which shuts behind him and he finds himself in an alley outside the theatre. His coughing subsides, and he tries to open the door which remains shut. He tries another door, then goes up some steps, and re-enters into the building.

Meanwhile the film has given way to a stage show and while dancing girls on the stage are going through a number, Benchley appears from the wings and walks on to the stage. Amidst laughter from the audience, he exits.

• One Third • of a Nation

From the Sensational New York 'Living Newspaper' on Housing Conditions



An impression of the opening fifteen seconds of "One Third of a Nation" . . . a scene of a tenement fire in New York City, which is repeated as the finale of the play . . .

ACT I

SCENE ONE—FIRE!

THE overture, which has, from time to time, introduced a phrase or two—barely distinguishable—of the better known 'home' songs—"Little Grey Home in the West," "Home, Sweet Home," etc., segues into "Home on the Range."

Curtain rises on a slum tenement which appears as a cross-section of a number of tenements. On stage right, the ground floor of a tenement building represents the entrance to a cellar. Above this, a room completely exposed, the walls upstage carrying up to the flies; over this cubicle are walls, possibly from a house that has been demolished and is left standing, showing the plaster lines made by the former floors and stairways.

Upstage and continuing from right to left is a cross-section of a main tenement showing *centre*—two exposed rooms, one over the other, and a narrow stairway to the left leading from the street up to the interior of the house. Continuing upward is the hallway of the third floor and a connecting stairway to the fourth floor.

To the left of this structure stands another small section of a tenement with a fire escape about 24 feet up and one window as an egress to the fire escape.

This whole structure is not meant to portray a realistic tenement house but should have the feeling and essence of

such. The scene develops as follows: AN OLD MAN SCAVENGER enters stage *left*, drawing after him a child's broken-down express cart which has been repaired by adding old carriage wheels, etc. It is loaded with broken scraps of wood. He stops, crosses into the alleyway seeking odds and ends of wood. His action indicates that it is cold and that he is gathering bits of firewood to make him warm and give him shelter. As he rummages in cans, a group of CHILDREN rush up out of the basement *right* screaming and shouting in the midst of their game. They stop as one of the boys suggests that they shoot crap. The game begins.

At the same time, from the topmost floor of the structure, a door opens, a shaft of light crosses the structure and a LITTLE GIRL, carrying a bucket much too large for her proceeds slowly down the structure. During her descent, TWO MEN, returning from work, enter *left* and proceed up the stairway on the *left*. She is met on the second landing by A MAN who continues down the stairs with her, whom she addresses as "Mr. Rosen."* By this time A POLICEMAN has entered stage *left* and has discovered the children shooting crap. He reprimands them, grabs hold of one of them and an argument ensues, as

LOUDSPEAKER

This might be 397 Madison Street, New York,† It might be 245 Halsey Street, Brooklyn,‡ or Jackson Avenue and 10th Street, Long Island City§—in February, 1924.

During this time, A WOMAN has entered with packages and is slowly ascending the stairway. On the upper landing, she meets A WOMAN CARRYING A BABY and they both stop to talk. A DRUNKARD crosses the stage. The POLICEMAN exits and as he does, THE CHILDREN boo after him. At this time, a wisp of smoke appears coming from the basement *right*. The CHILDREN sniff and go to investigate. Almost immediately, there is a slight flurry of excitement and smoke appears in the upper rooms. Excitement; PEOPLE begin to appear in the hallways; muffled shouts of "fire"—"smoke" are heard as smoke and flame appear coming from the basement *left*. By this time, the excitement has spread throughout the structure and more shouts of "fire"; smoke spreads rapidly upwards; A MAN appears on the fire escape *left*. Mr. ROSEN, returning, attempts to get through the crowds which by this time have formed downstage *left*. Fire sirens; FIREMEN appear; THE POLICEMAN returns; KIDS on roller skates with hookey sticks are coming across the stage, all looking upward at the MAN on the fire escape.

There are shouts of "Jump!" "Jump!"; sirens and screams reach their peak as the MAN attempts to use the ladder which is hanging from the fire escape. He tries to unhook it and as he does, it gives way and dangles perilously over the heads of the crowd below. There are more shouts of "Jump!" "Jump!"; more screams; he prepares to jump; a few cries of "Look out" —as we blackout—.

* Fictional character.
† *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
‡ *Ibid.*, February 21, 1924.
§ *Ibid.*, February 24, 1924.

ACT I

SCENE TWO—INVESTIGATION

Loudspeaker
Man (Mr. Rosen)
Commissioner
3 Inspectors
  Fire Department
  Building Department
  Old Building Bureau, Tenement House Department
Secretary
Mr. Schultz—landlord
Man
Automobile Salesman

LOUDSPEAKER

Thirteen persons lost their lives in that fire on Madison Street—four men, two women and seven children. Another man was killed in an unsuccessful attempt to make his way down a fire escape ladder into the yard. When the fire department arrived the building was in flames. Only a few of those inside could be reached . . .‖ What started this fire? Why did it spread so quickly? Why was the death toll so high?

Light up on a table downstage *right*. An overhead spot picks up a MAN, seated, near table. He is the one who tried to get back into the burning building. He is dazed and a little cowed, absorbed in something inside himself, puzzling it out. Upstage, *centre*, seated in a row, the INSPECTORS of the Fire Department, Building Department and the Old Building Bureau of the Tenement House Department.

Downstage *left*, conspicuously empty, a chair. . . .

There is a SECRETARY taking down testimony. All attention is focused on the MAN, *right*, and the COMMISSIONER interrogating him.

COMMISSIONER

(*sympathetically but a little worn, as though this has been going on for some time and he has almost despaired of getting an answer*)

. . . and now, Mr. Rosen,¶ won't you tell us what happened when you came home?

(*no answer*, ROSEN *just stares ahead, still absorbed, still trying to puzzle it out*)

I realise how difficult this is, but we're trying to get at what caused this fire, and you've got to help us. That's how we can prevent more fires, by finding out about these things and correcting them.

(*no answer*)
(*almost pleadingly*)

Mr. Rosen . . .

‖ *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
¶ Fictional character.

ROSEN

(*turns his head, regards* COMMISSIONER; *then slowly*)

They no let me into the house.

(*He stares out again*)

COMMISSIONER

(*gratefully*)

Thank you. And then, what happened?

ROSEN

My wife burn up. In bed. My two children burn up, in bed.

(*He faces* COMMISSIONER)

Sons: Mine! Two!

COMMISSIONER

(*eagerly*)

And then?

ROSEN

And then. . . . They no let me into the house.

(*relapses into his brooding*)

COMMISSIONER

(*giving it up as a bad job*)

That's all. Thank you.

(*stands regarding* ROSEN *for a moment—then turns quickly and sharply to* FIRE INSPECTOR)

Are you the Fire Inspector?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER

What do you know about this?

FIRE INSPECTOR

The flames started in the cellar.**

COMMISSIONER

How?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Probably in a pile of rubbish. We're not sure.

COMMISSIONER

What ignited the rubbish?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Cigarette, maybe. We don't know that, either.

COMMISSIONER

What happened then?

FIRE INSPECTOR

The halls went up and the stairways. That's why they couldn't get out. Then the walls caved in. You couldn't stop it because the wainscoting was made of wood. That carried the flames right up like somebody ran along it with a torch.††

COMMISSIONER

Is wooden wainscoting a violation?

FIRE INSPECTOR

(*looking at* COMMISSIONER *then nodding his head in direction of* BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR)

Well, er . . . maybe you'd better ask the Building Department about that.

COMMISSIONER

(*crosses to* BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR)

Are you the Inspector of the Building Department?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

Yes, sir.

** Digest of Report of New York Board of Fire Underwriters on February 19, 1924, Tenement Fire at 397 Madison Street, New York—Municipal Reference Library, New York, N.Y.
†† Digest of Report. *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

COMMISSIONER

When was this house built?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

1884. It's an old law tenement.*

COMMISSIONER

What's an old law tenement?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

One that was built before the law of 1901.†

COMMISSIONER

What law was that?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

It said that any building erected after that date had to have certain improvements like a separate water closet for each apartment, adequate fire escapes and side courts twelve feet wide in place of the old air shaft 28 inches wide and so forth.‡

COMMISSIONER

And those already built and still in use?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

Well, they had to conform to the new law in certain respects.

COMMISSIONER

What respects?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

Well, they had to have fire escapes.§

COMMISSIONER

How about wooden wainscoting? Is that a violation?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

In a new house, yes.

COMMISSIONER

In an old law tenement?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

No!

COMMISSIONER

Have you recently inspected the premises at 397 Madison Street?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

Well, er, that comes under the duties of the Tenement Houses Department.

COMMISSIONER

(*crosses to* TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR)

Are you the Tenement House Inspector?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER

Did you re-examine the premises at 397 Madison Street?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Yes, sir. About six months ago.‖

COMMISSIONER

What did you find?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

An adequate number of fire escapes with vertical ladders as required by law.¶

COMMISSIONER

Is the collection of rubbish in the cellar a violation?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

It is.

COMMISSIONER

Did you find any there?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

No, I didn't.

COMMISSIONER

But you haven't been there in six months. Why?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Because we haven't received any complaint since.

COMMISSIONER

You mean a house is never inspected unless a complaint has been received?**

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Exactly.

COMMISSIONER

(*sharply*)

But you did receive one six months ago?††

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER

(*eager to discover a violation*)

What was it for?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Roaches.

COMMISSIONER

Roaches.

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Roaches.

COMMISSIONER

. . . Mr. Inspector, why must you wait for complaints before an inspection is made? Why don't you have periodic inspections?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

(*rises; distinctly enumerating statistics*)

Mr. Commissioner, we have 224 inspectors to cover 105,000 tenements‡‡ and apartment houses. It would take our entire staff three years to visit each one of these houses once.§§

COMMISSIONER

I see. . . . Just one more thing, Mr. Inspector, in the light of your years of experience in the Department, would you consider this building a firetrap?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR

Mr. Commissioner, if that building is a firetrap, then so is every old law tenement in New York City‖‖, *and there are* 67,000 *of them!*¶¶

COMMISSIONER

That's all, gentlemen. Thank you. My report will state that a fire of undetermined origin broke out in the basement of the house at 397 Madison Street. . . . According to your testimony there were no violations and all the laws were scrupulously——

(*They all rise and prepare to leave*)

LOUDSPEAKER

(*breaking in*)

Just a moment, Mr. Commissioner. Has *everybody* testified?

COMMISSIONER

Why, yes. . . .

LOUDSPEAKER

Well, how about that empty chair? Don't you think there ought to be somebody in it?

(COMMISSIONER *shakes head in bewilderment*)

Well, you want to get at the bottom of this thing, don't you?

COMMISSIONER

Certainly.

LOUDSPEAKER

And you want to prevent more fires, by finding out about these things and correcting them, don't you?

COMMISSIONER

That's what I'm here for.

LOUDSPEAKER

(*with finality*)

Then let's call the landlord!

COMMISSIONER

Oh, no, I can't do that?

LOUDSPEAKER

Why not?

COMMISSIONER

The law doesn't allow me to. Only in a clear case of violation are we permitted to call in the landlord.* And you heard what they said:

(*nodding to* INSPECTORS)

there were no violations.

LOUDSPEAKER

Well, that settles it. . . . Of course, we can't break the law.

(*There is a pause, then, insidiously*)

But wouldn't you like to know what he's got to say, anyhow . . . just, sort of, off the record?

COMMISSIONER

I certainly would!

LOUDSPEAKER

Fine. I'll call him!

(*calling*)

Mr. Schultz!† Mr. Schultz! Is Mr. Schultz in the house?

SCHULTZ

(*emerges from alley left, where he has been looking over his building*)

Someone call me?

LOUDSPEAKER

Hello, Mr. Schultz, how are you?

SCHULTZ

I'm all right.

LOUDSPEAKER

And how is Mrs. Schultz?

SCHULTZ

She's all right, too. But the baby, Carl, he's got the measles.

LOUDSPEAKER

I see, Mr. Schultz, would you mind testifying about your house on Madison Street?

SCHULTZ

(*a bit suspicious*)

No, I wouldn't mind. Where do I go?

LOUDSPEAKER

Go right over to the table there.

(*as* SCHULTZ *comes to table*)

Mr. Commissioner, this is Carl Schultz, Senior. . . . Mr. Schultz, this is the Commissioner.

(SCHULTZ *and* COMMISSIONER *shake hands*)

There you are. The witness is yours.

(SCHULTZ *starts a bit as he spies* ROSEN)

* Report of New York State Board of Housing, Legislative Document (1932), 84, p. 11.

† Report of N.Y. State Board of Housing. Legislative Document (1932).

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

§ *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

‖ *Ibid.*

¶ *Ibid.*

** New York City Tenement House Department.

†† *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

‡‡ Langdon Post, N.Y. City Tenement House Commissioner.

§§ *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

‖‖ *Ibid.*

¶¶ Report of the N.Y. State Board of Housing Legislative Document (1932), 84.

* New York State Statute Tenement House Act, 1909, Section 143.

† Fictional character—scene creative.

COMMISSIONER

Won't you sit down, Mr. Schultz?

(*waves him to empty chair*, SCHULTZ *sits*)

Now, Mr. Schultz, were there any violations in your house?

(SCHULTZ *hesitates and looks up at the loudspeaker for advice*)

LOUDSPEAKER

Go on, Carl. It's all off the record!

SCHULTZ

Well, maybe a few. But they were all small and had nothing to do with the fire.

COMMISSIONER

Now, do you live in that house?

SCHULTZ

(*looking up at him*)

I do not!

COMMISSIONER

Why not?

SCHULTZ

(*slowly*)

Well, er, I got to live near my butcher store uptown.

COMMISSIONER

Is that the only reason?

SCHULTZ

(*slyly*)

That's the only one I tell you about!

COMMISSIONER

I see. . . . Now tell me, why did you never renovate that house . . . fix it over, so it would be a better place to live in, and not such a firetrap.

SCHULTZ

Well, first, I don't have any money. Second, it's not any worse than any other tenement on the block; and third, if I do have the money and fix it up I have to raise the rent to get my money back. The tenants they have no money to pay *and everybody moves out!*

(*spreading hands to express that*)

COMMISSIONER

Did you make any money on your house, Mr. Schultz?

SCHULTZ

Some years yes, some years no. After mortgage is paid, sometimes a little, sometimes nothing.

(*shakes head, sadly*)

Ach, it is a bad investment.

LOUDSPEAKER

(*suddenly, sharply*)

Do you want to sell, Mr. Schultz?

SCHULTZ

(*A bargaining look comes into his eyes; he becomes cautious*)

Sell? Well, maybe!

LOUDSPEAKER

I'll give you just what you paid for it, even though the house to-day in 1924 . . . is practically worthless.

(SCHULTZ *shakes his head, turning it down*)

When you bought that house twenty-five years ago, it was almost brand new. To-day it's just a rubbish heap—a slum. Come on, Mr. Schultz, you can get rid of it without losing a cent!

(SCHULTZ *shakes his head again*)

Perhaps you don't understand. Let me show you what happens when people try to get rid of something they've used for a long time.

(*Spot picks out* MAN *and automobile* SALESMAN, *left*)

MAN

I'd like to sell my car.

SALESMAN

What make?

MAN

Dodge.

SALESMAN

What model?

MAN

Sedan.

SALESMAN

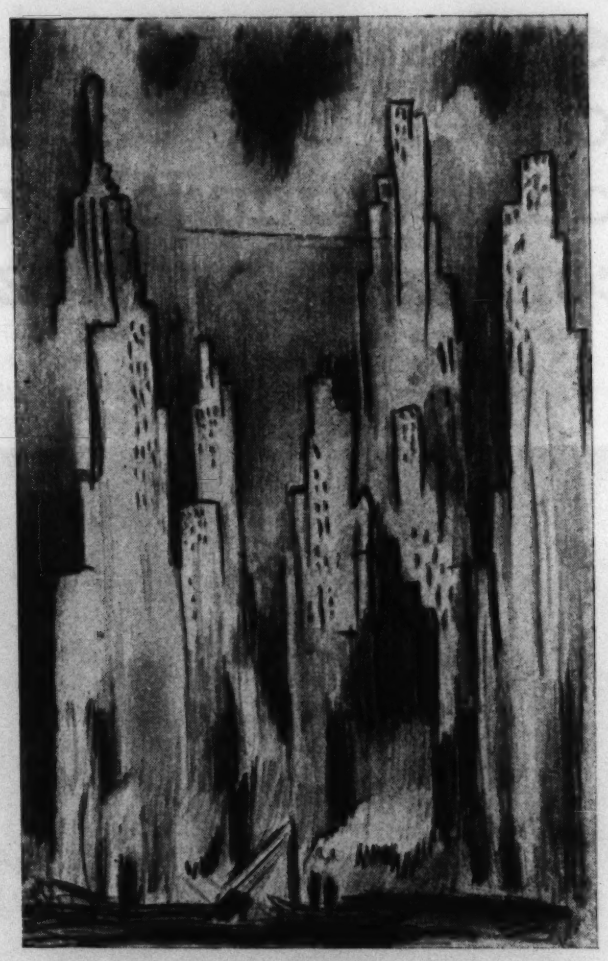
What condition?

MAN

It's four years old. Cost me $2,300.*

SALESMAN

I'll give you five hundred.†



MAN

Five hundred!

SALESMAN

Mister, the minute you bought that car it became second-hand. Every day you hold on to it, it's worth less. Come around and see me next year, and I'll give you three hundred.‡

MAN

$500!

SALESMAN

$500! And you'd better grab it before I change my mind!

(*Blackout on the* TWO MEN)

LOUDSPEAKER

D'you see, Mr. Schultz, that's what happens.

SCHULTZ

(*self-satisfied*)

Not to me it won't.

* Branham's Automobile Reference Book, 1928, p. 56.

† *New York American*, June 22, 1924—classified advertisements.

‡ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1925.

LOUDSPEAKER

No matter what you have, furniture, clothing, a bicycle, or a yacht—the longer you hold on to it and use it—the lower the price drops.

SCHULTZ

(*leans forward*)

You know the trouble with that fellow? He didn't invest his money in real estate.

LOUDSPEAKER

In a house, you mean?

SCHULTZ

No. My house is just like you say—rubbish heap, a slum. Ah, but the land it's on. That's different!

LOUDSPEAKER

Oh, *the land!*

SCHULTZ

In a big city like this, land never goes down. If you held on to it long enough it goes up, up, up all the time! I pay more than it's worth when I buy, I get more when I sell! I cannot fix up the apartments, I cannot lower the rents, why? Because the land cost too much! The man who sold it to me, he made three hundred per cent—*on the land!* Each time rents went up, up, up!

LOUDSPEAKER

But, Mr. Schultz, you're speculating, and if you're successful, the standard of living of six million people§ goes down. They still have to pay more in rent and do without other things that they need.

SCHULTZ

(*rises, almost hysterically*)

Speculating? Sure, I am! And so is every other landlord who expects to make anything out of his investment! I tell you, it's land, LAND, LAND! *That's where the money is!* And I don't sell mine without a nice big profit!

(*There is a pause. For the first time* ROSEN *looks up. Slowly he rises and crosses to* SCHULTZ)

ROSEN

(*softly*)

And me? What about me?

SCHULTZ

(*slowly, earnestly*)

Mr. Rosen, believe me, I'm sorry for you. I'll do anything I can to help you. . . . But if you can only afford to pay $24 a month, you'll have to live in my house or one just like it—and you cannot blame me.

(*a pause—even more slowly*)

You'll have to go back a long time and blame whatever it was that made New York City real estate the soundest and most profitable speculation on the face of the earth.

(*Hold—as they regard each other, and DIM OUT*)

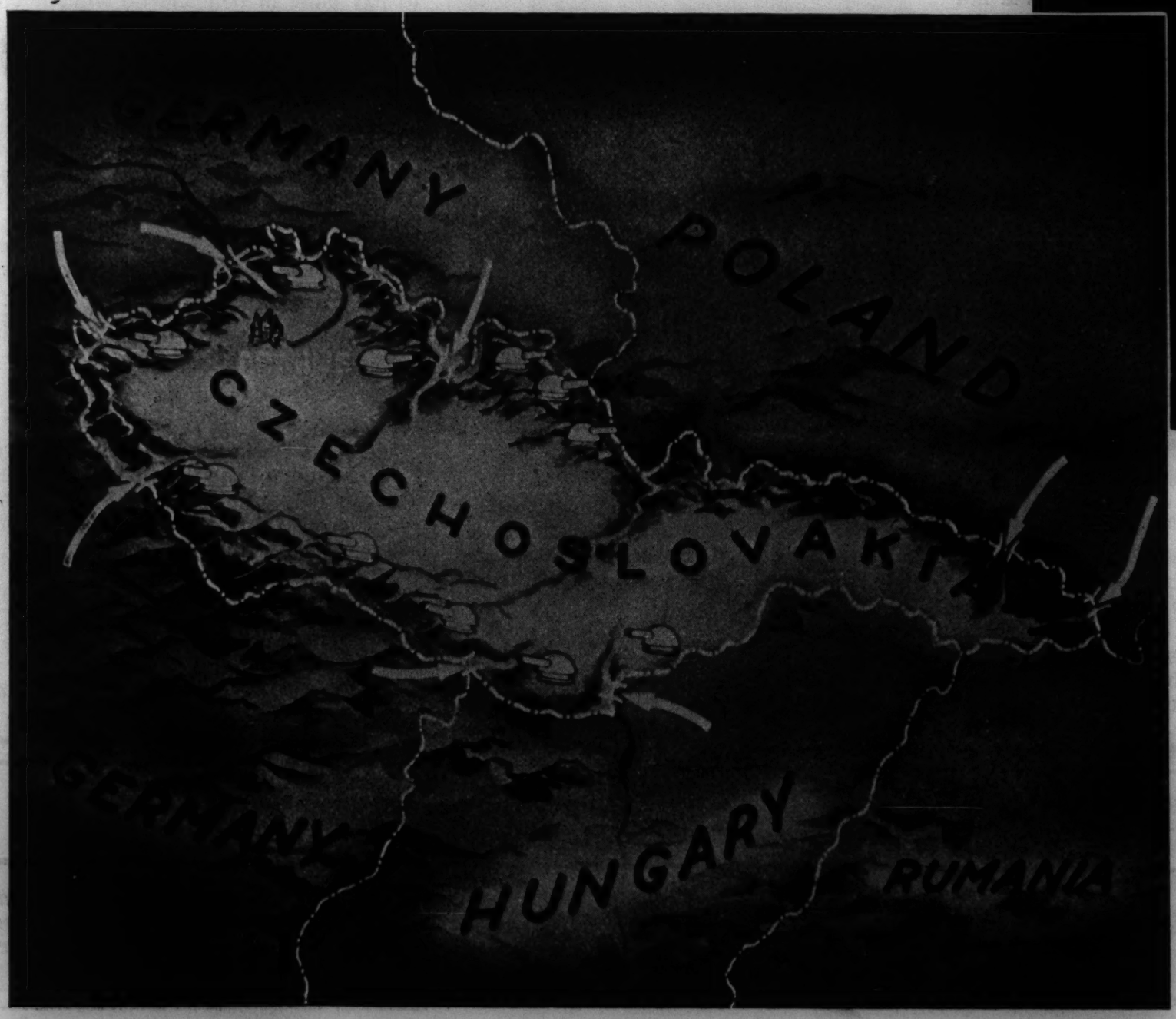
§ 1935 *World Almanac*, p. 483: Population New York City, 1924.

●

These extracts from 'One Third of a Nation' are taken from the Press Edition of the play, issued by the Federal Theatre Project, New York.

EUROPEAN STORM CENTRE

Front page story in the world's newspapers, Czechoslovakia forms the subject of the March of Time's newest issue.
The film describes the Czech Republic as " democratic Island marked for conquest by Nazi Germany."



Map showing mountain fortresses of the Republic. *(March of Time)*

All pictures on these pages are from The March of Time film on Czechoslovakia.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, storm centre of Central Europe, product of the Peace Treaties, a nation made up of many nationalities, marked down by Hitler for conquest.

Inside the boundaries of this tiny Republic are three and a half million Germans, out of a total population of fifteen millions.

March of Time No. 3 (Fourth Year) commentary tells the story thus:

In all anxious Europe, in 1938, few men have a greater responsibility than the National Defence Council of Czechoslovakia.

This little Central European republic, born of the great war, is to-day a democratic island marked for conquest by Nazi Germany.

Masaryk, its first President, who died in 1937, upheld the loftiest ideals of liberal democracy, and left to his successor, Dr. Eduard Benes, a nation whose progress had won it the world's respect.

Out of Prague, for centuries a provincial Austrian city, has emerged the modern capital of a vigorous young nation, the centre of a commerce and industry reaching out across the world.

To-day, Czechoslovakia maintains complete freedom of religion, of the press and of speech. Moreover, it is a nation of minority groups, the largest of them being the 3,500,000 Germans concentrated in the Sudeten Mountain regions—tied by language, customs, and sympathies to the Germany of their ancestors.

When world depression brought hard times and unemployment to the Sudeten Germans, they blamed the Czechs, whom they had always despised. Soon discontent took political shape, and with its 2,000,000 members working closely with Nazi Germany, the Sudeten party began to make its influence felt.

In Czechoslovakia is an abundance of Germany's greatest needs: rich agriculture, flourishing industry, wealthy deposits of raw materials and great munition factories. But most important is her strategic value. Encircled by heavily fortified mountain ranges Czechoslovakia is a natural fortress, commanding the whole of Central Europe.

Because its well-equipped army is only a quarter the size of Hitler's, Czechoslovakia's prime guarantee of safety has always been its close alliance with powerful France. But in 1938, the Czechs, already concerned by a Franco-British alliance for peace, watched with anxiety as Conrad Henlein, leader of the Sudeten German party flew to Berlin after talking with British statesmen in London.

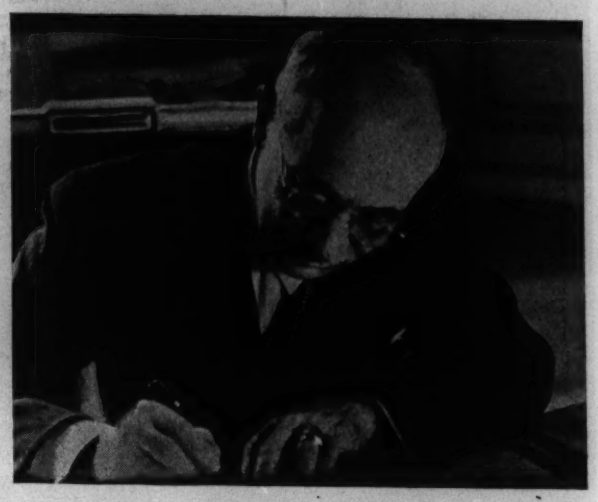
With rumours of German troop movements across the border, President Benes, remembering the fate of Austria, quickly mobilised the entire man-power of Czechoslovakia's standing army and reserves, a force 400,000 strong. For the first time, a small nation, unaided, defied the thunderings of the mightiest warlord of modern times. Then came word that if Czechoslovakia was attacked, France would fight. And as the jubilant Czechs learnt that Hitler's troops had fallen back from the frontier, they knew that they had won. But in the full knowledge that this was not the end, the nation issued a decree assigning every man, woman and child to their defence stations in readiness for war. For the valiant little republic is determined that Hitler will never destroy Czech freedom until he has first destroyed the Czech people.

As World Film News goes to Press the world watches anxiously while European statesmen seek a compromise which will satisfy the demands of the Sudetenese German, and avoid the military conquest of the Republic by Hitler.

Armed conflict between Germany and the Czech Republic could involve France: it could involve Russia: it could involve Britain.

Will Czechoslovakia prove the cause of a general European War? Will a sudden onslaught by Germany overcome resistance so swiftly that allies will be powerless, and Hitler's conquest be achieved? Or will compromise be found satisfactory to both the Czechs and the Nazis?

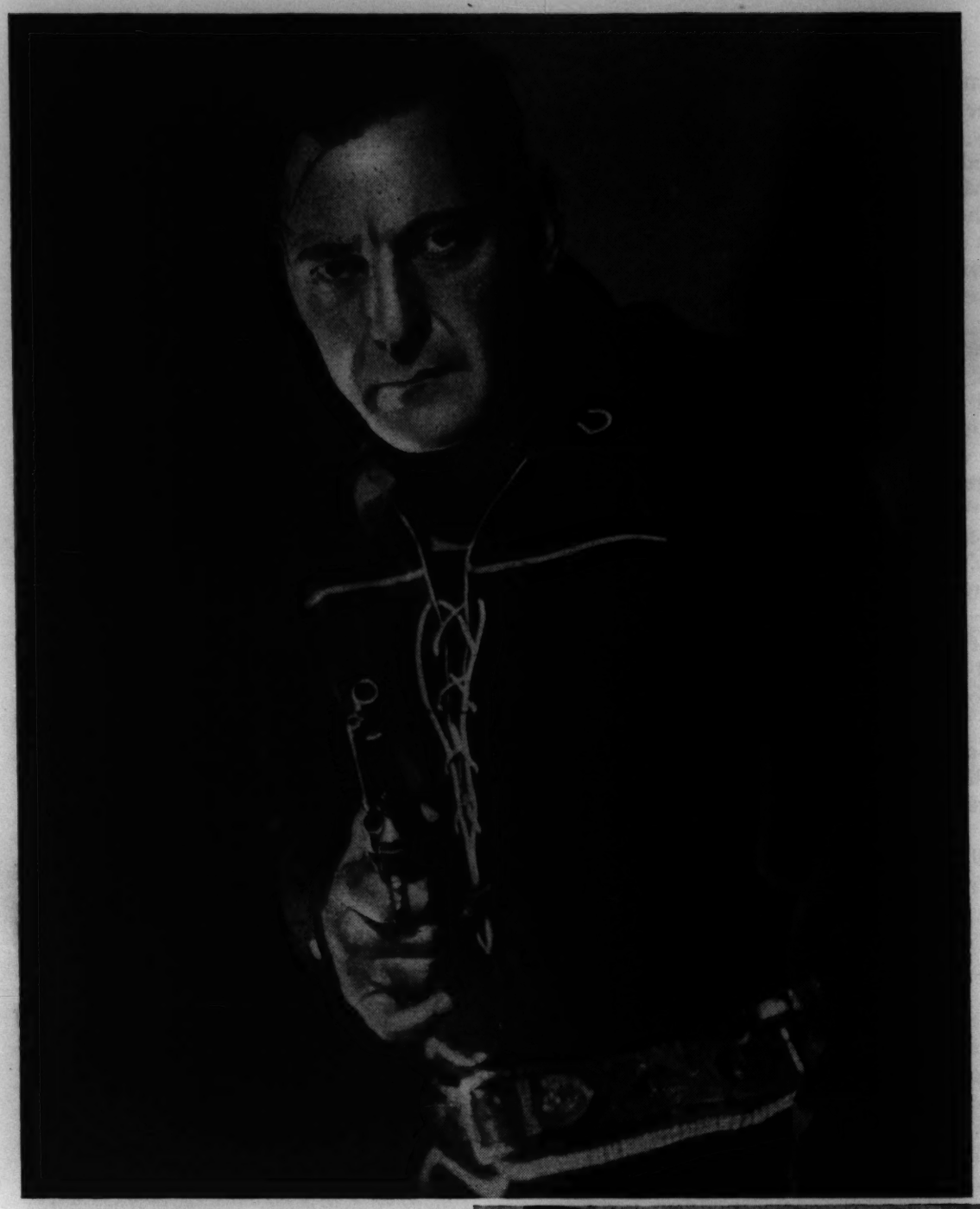
These are the questions anxious observers are asking. By the time World Film News appears the answers may be known.



President Benes signs the mobilisation orders . . .

The man-power of the small Republic is mobilised

The swiftness of the Czech mobilisation surprised Hitler . . . his troops fell back from the Czech frontier . . .



TIME
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COWBOYS

From Bill Hart to Buck Jones, the "Western" has remained much the same and kept its popularity.

Unknown to the sophisticates of London movie-land are these stars of the saddle, Buck Jones, Bill Boyd, George O'Brien.

Article by THOMAS BAIRD

Above: Buck Jones.

Right: William S. Hart, cowboy star of the silent days, in "Tumbleweeds" (Picture from "Movie Parade," by Paul Rotha; Studio Publishing Co.)

JUST the other day I was walking through the Empire Exhibition. I had done my rather tiresome duty to Engineering and Industry, lifted my hat to the United Kingdom, been a little thrilled by the Victoria Falls, impressed by the Scottish Pavilion and rather impatient in the Palace of Arts. I then went to the Amusement Park which I suppose is the ultimate justification of all exhibitions. Not having the stomach for the major tortures I went for the side shows where I tried to do easy looking impossibilities with hoops and pennies. Turning away after innumerable attempts to win ten shillings I saw a panorama of the most amazing posters.

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Twenty years ago the milestones of my life were such momentous events as the annual setting out for the seaside, the water-pistol season, the discovery of pea-shooters, kick-the-can, the Rangers-Celtic football match . . . and Hengler's Circus.

Once a year for many years I was taken to see this amazing show, a mélange of all the traditional elements . . . gladiators, ballerinas, clowns, trapeze artists, horses, elephants, pigeons, cowboys, redskins, fakirs, a band all scarlet and gold and an unbelievably exciting finale known as The Water Scene. The fascinating thing about Hengler's Circus was that the ring could be flooded. This was obviously useful for sea lion acts but that was a detail; it was helpful to water-clowns but that also was a detail. The flooding of the ring stood for something much more important. In the grand finale of cowboys and Indians the ring could become the lake in the cañon, it could become the mysterious pool in which innocent victims sank to unplumbed depths never to rise again. It became the pool which lay below the rapids down which, from sixty feet above, descended a stream of whooping redskins. Half way down the rapids, shots from the rifles of cowboys caused the redskins in the canoes to leap in magnificent death throes and be hurled to the depths below. But greatest of all variations on the water theme was The Bursting of the Dam. This invariably happened in the last ten minutes of the circus. Then Hell broke loose as a solid column of water fell from about a hundred feet above into the ring carrying with it papier maché boulders, three-ply log-cabins, birch bark canoes, prancing mustangs, heroic cowboys and painted Indians. No poster artist ever exaggerated that scene of terror or even did it justice. The advertisements were in fact a pale shadow of the reality.

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It is significant that some of the cinema's first stars were its clowns. Pantomime is international, age-old and ageless. Almost invariably the clown steals the show. With Chaplin on the Bill, most actors look like two cents. Comedian Kelly in the stalls of Olympia can outshine the tinsel of the ring. Only the other week, Joe Jackson, far from the top of the Bill at the Palladium put all of the rest in the background. Long after he had gone from the stage we were haunted by his silent gestures. Jackson is a genius. From his first fumbling entrance, when he disentangles himself from the curtain, to his last hilarious adventure on a dilapidated bicycle which he almost accidentally discovers, he is mute and glorious; pathetic, audacious, simple, subtle, panther-like and elephantine, confiding and aloof all by turns.

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LAST ROUNDUP

In Chicago a month ago Tim McCoy's Real Wild West and Rough Riders of the World were let loose with charging horses, yippiding cowboys, lassos thrown to rope in the general public. In Washington last week McCoy's broncos seemed all too sadly busted. First, F. Stewart Stranahan of Providence, R.I., with a $17,500 claim against the show, threw it into receivership. Then, padding at Stranahan's heels a delegation of McCoy's Sioux Redmen visited Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, threatened a sitdown strike against Tim McCoy unless he: (1) came through with back pay, (2) furnished more than one clean shirt a week, (3) provided free war paint. Sent back to the show by Collier, the Sioux refused to perform. In a big frontier-drama act where white men were supposed to make Indians bite the dust, for two performances there was not a Sioux Indian to bite.

After that, there were no performances at all. Restrained by court order from moving on to Baltimore, the show folded for good in Washington, a martyr to McCoy's belief that the Buffalo Bill tradition still has life in it.

No doubt about the last two lines. Most people speak of the cowboys in that vein, as part of the good old days beyond recall, and here is what *Time* had to say about William S. Hart in February :—

BATHOS

For many a cinema oldster no memory is quite so thrilling as that of two-gun, square-shooting William S. Hart, limned with his painted pony against a two-reel Western sky. One melancholy day last week 67-year-old Bill Hart stood disconsolate by a deep, wide, newly dug grave on his Southern California ranch. A few neighbours stood with him; Mexican guitars softly slurred La Golondrina. Slowly the ranch hands lowered a gaunt, bay-and-white carcass into the grave, covered it over. It was the end of the trail for 31-year-old pinto pony Fritz, who shared all Actor Hart's cinema glory, retired with him over a decade ago. In a voice that seemed near breaking, Bill Hart spoke a brief eulogy: "He was the finest, bravest horse that ever lived . . . We understood and loved each other."

But *Time* and some more of us do not get far enough away from the too, too adult audience of the Broadways and West Ends. We forget the Main Streets and the Middletowns and we forget the Main Street streak in most of us. The fact is there are more cowboy stars to-day than ever before. Some, it is true, have capitulated to the march of time. These ones sing—not the real songs of the cowboys but re-vamped, jazzed-up versions. But some of the men of the old tradition stand high in the list of popularity. True, Gene Autry with his music to help him out heads the list, but number two and number three are Bill Boyd and Buck Jones, playing only one instrument—a shooting iron.

[*Continued on page* 169.

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By vote of United States Exhibitors the first ten Western stars are Gene Autry, Bill Boyd, Buck Jones, Dick Foran, George O'Brien, Tex Ritter, Bob Steele, Three Mesquiteers, Charles Starrett, Ken Maynard, with Johnny Mack Brown, Tim McCoy, Hoot Gibson, Jack Holt, Harry Carey further down the list. Now these are not votes collected from Boy Scouts but from the hard-headed exhibitors of the United States. It may come as a shock to you, especially when *Time* printed as it did in May this year :—

LAST ROUNDUP

In Chicago a month ago Tim McCoy's Real Wild West and Rough Riders of the World were let loose with charging horses, yippiding cowboys, lassos thrown to rope in the general public. In Washington last week McCoy's broncos seemed all too sadly busted. First, F. Stewart Stranahan of Providence, R.I., with a $17,500 claim against the show, threw it into receivership. Then, padding at Stranahan's heels a delegation of McCoy's Sioux Redmen visited Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, threatened a sitdown strike against Tim McCoy unless he: (1) came through with back pay, (2) furnished more than one clean shirt a week, (3) provided free war paint. Sent back to the show by Collier, the Sioux refused to perform. In a big frontier-drama act where white men were supposed to make Indians bite the dust, for two performances there was not a Sioux Indian to bite.

After that, there were no performances at all. Restrained by court order from moving on to Baltimore, the show folded for good in Washington, a martyr to McCoy's belief that the Buffalo Bill tradition still has life in it.

No doubt about the last two lines. Most people speak of the cowboys in that vein, as part of the good old days beyond recall, and here is what *Time* had to say about William S. Hart in February :—

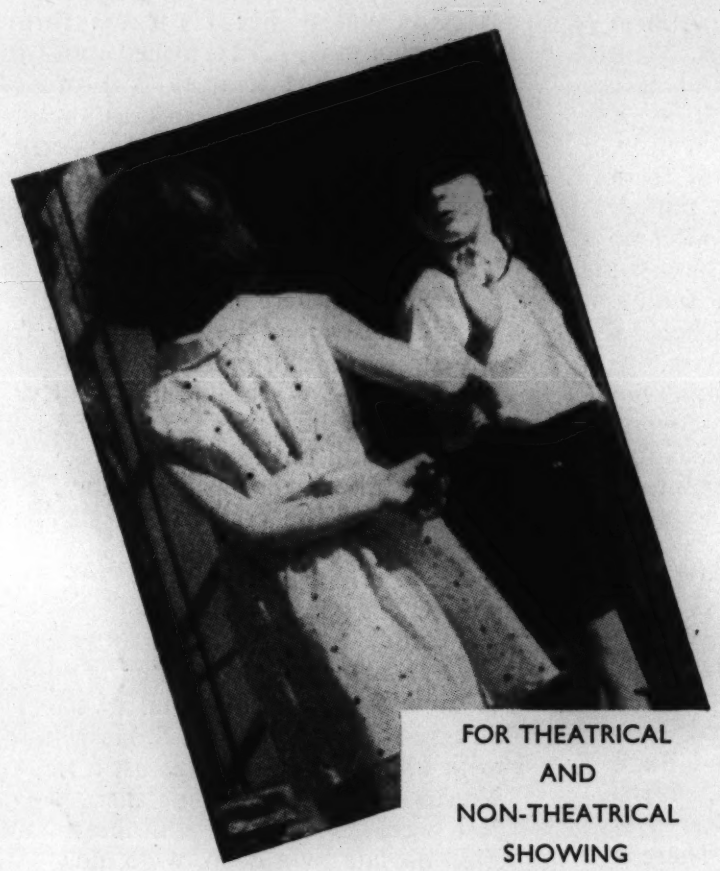
BATHOS

For many a cinema oldster no memory is quite so thrilling as that of two-gun, square-shooting William S. Hart, limned with his painted pony against a two-reel Western sky. One melancholy day last week 67-year-old Bill Hart stood disconsolate by a deep, wide, newly dug grave on his Southern California ranch. A few neighbours stood with him; Mexican guitars softly slurred La Golondrina. Slowly the ranch hands lowered a gaunt, bay-and-white carcass into the grave, covered it over. It was the end of the trail for 31-year-old pinto pony Fritz, who shared all Actor Hart's cinema glory, retired with him over a decade ago. In a voice that seemed near breaking, Bill Hart spoke a brief eulogy: "He was the finest, bravest horse that ever lived . . . We understood and loved each other."

But *Time* and some more of us do not get far enough away from the too, too adult audience of the Broadways and West Ends. We forget the Main Streets and the Middletowns and we forget the Main Street streak in most of us. The fact is there are more cowboy stars to-day than ever before. Some, it is true, have capitulated to the march of time. These ones sing—not the real songs of the cowboys but re-vamped, jazzed-up versions. But some of the men of the old tradition stand high in the list of popularity. True, Gene Autry with his music to help him out heads the list, but number two and number three are Bill Boyd and Buck Jones, playing only one instrument—a shooting iron.

[*Continued on page* 169.

FOUR FILMS



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You may say that America has a reason for hanging on to her Western stars. It is part of her history. But British exhibitors say to-day much the same thing. In spite of the fact that there are fewer cinemas in Britain than in America, the total number of votes recorded for the Western stars was only slightly less in Great Britain. Here is their roster of fame: Gene Autry, Buck Jones, Dick Foran, William Boyd, George O'Brien, John Wayne, Tim McCoy, Ken Maynard, Harry Carey, Hoot Gibson. If you want to see their pictures you have, of course, to go a little way from Leicester Square but you will find them in their hundreds not three miles away, and in their thousands all over the provinces. There is ample evidence that the youngsters still hold in their hearts a large corner for the cowboys. The singing cowboys do not rate with them. It is Buck Jones that counts. Buck has fallen heir to the reverence once accorded to William S. Hart, Broncho Billy and Tom Mix.

BUCK JONES followed the line of most cowboy stars. He was a real cowboy, came into pictures almost by accident and like all the others, tried to make his personal popularity carry over to the old Wild West Show—and failed. He, too, found that while the Western tradition is far from dead, the cinema has beaten the circus at its own game. Here is part of his story as told recently by J. B. Crisswold in *The American Magazine:*—

On the street early one morning he met a friend from Oklahoma who was dolled up in a ten-gallon hat, boot and chaps.

"Where's the rodeo?" Buck asked.

"I'm on my way to the studio," said the friend proudly. "I'm in pictures."

"What kind of pictures?"

"Moving pictures. They make 'em here."

This was news to Buck.

"Come along", said the friend, "and watch me act."

So Buck went along and was standing around watching his friend act, when somebody said, "Go over and make up as a sheepherder."

Buck told me, "I got five dollars a day for six days—more than I'd made in a month. And all I did was sit under a wickiup. I said to myself, 'I've been in a lot of screwy businesses, but this is far and away the screwiest. I'd like to get in it."

Even screwier things were to happen. Buck was the handsomest cowboy who had ever been seen in Hollywood, and one of the best riders. He wasn't afraid to try anything and had little trouble in getting work. He played small parts in several pictures and doubled in dangerous stunts for William Farnum and Tom Mix.

The producer decided Tom Mix might work a little harder if he thought he had a potent rival. And Buck was thrown into a situation so insane that even Hollywood blinked its eyes.

Buck's boss advised him to get out and show himself and to act like a Big Shot, like Mix. But Mix was a master in the art of acting like the Big Shot he was, and even if Buck bought the loudest cowboy clothes in town he never could hope to out-act Tom Mix. So the producer had a Big Idea. He took Buck to the best tailor and the best haberdasher in Los Angeles and bought him $2,500 worth of clothes, including a silk hat, a dress suit, a cutaway coat, spats, a cane, patent-leather shoes, and tailor-made shirts with Buck's monogram on the sleeve.

"Wear these," said the producer. "Get out and be seen. It'll worry Mix."

"I knew all movie people were crazy", Buck told me, "so I just decided this fellow was crazier than any of them and I'd better humour him." And, quite uncomfortable and bewildered, Buck, with Mrs. Buck, went out to worry Tom Mix.

It didn't make sense to Buck, but the sight of a cowboy in silk hat, cutaway and spats certainly alarmed Hollywood and may have worried Mix. Anyway, the producer seemed to be satisfied and after a couple of months Buck was allowed to be himself again.

Ten years later, in 1931, Buck was getting $3,000 a week as a star. He was booked on a personal-appearance tour with Silver, and the salary was $5,000 a week.

Buck reasoned, "If one guy and one horse could make that much money, what could he do with a Wild West Show?"

Because he had refused to gamble in the boom days, the market crash had affected him not at all. He had saved $375,000. He decided to become another Buffalo Bill and Miller Brothers combined, and organized the Buck Jones Wild West Show. Mrs. Jones thought it was a good idea and she appeared with Buck in the show.

It opened in San Francisco and closed three months later, in Danville, Ill., when a sheriff took it over. Buck lost every cent he had. A rival show had ruined him by tearing down his billing. He would get into a town and find that nobody knew he was coming.

Inexperienced, he didn't know how to fight such practices and he moved from town to town, playing to small crowds, paying the expenses out of his own bankroll, refusing to quit.

The show that had put him out of business offered Buck $3,000 a week to join it. He said he'd starve, first—and he almost did. He drove back to Hollywood, sleeping in the car because he didn't have enough money to pay for a hotel room.

But if the cowboy tradition seemed dead on the road, it was still very much alive on the films. Buck came back modestly but very surely. Now Buck "produces his own pictures, and has mastered the science of quantity production at low cost. The Big Stars make about four a year, consuming from six weeks to six months in shooting time, and the cost may be from $500,000 to $1,000,000. Buck shoots a picture in eight or ten days, makes eight a year at a cost of about $65,000 each, and their gross revenue is approximately $160,000 each. He is paid production cost and 20 per cent. of the gross."

These cheap, well-made pictures do more than thrill each generation of youngsters. They make stars: they make directors. Carole Lombard and Gary Cooper graduated out of "horse opera" and W. S. Van Dyke directed Buck Jones for four years.

Buck Jones's pictures are not only good—they are Good. When the Hays Office and the purity campaigners started their clean-up, they found Buck above criticism. He gets his man but he does not shoot him, usually it is arranged that fists and not guns do the job, and when shooting is necessary the Bad Ones usually shoot each other. Buck never starts a fight, he only defends himself. There is no gambling, there are no love scenes. All this he believes increases his popularity, as the roll of the Buck Jones Rangers, a publicity stunt which has signed on 2,000,000 youngsters, clearly shows. This Hays Office version of the Boy Scouts is sworn to the creed of Buck Jones, the White Man on the White Horse.

NORTH SEA and YELLOW JACK

Reviewed by Basil Wright

IT would be very unfair to Cavalcanti and Watt to bespatter *North Sea* with indiscriminate eulogies, for it is a film which merits close and constructive criticism. Nevertheless, after seeing it several times I can feel no inclination towards any comprehensive iconoclasms, for in essentials it is as right as rain; it rates right at the top for drama, sincerity, and for a big step forward in the history of the documentary film. To the reconstruction of a real-life incident and to the presentation of a highly organised and everyday process it brings not only the intimate observation of ordinary men about their work, but also the accurate (and therefore so much more moving) presentation of the behaviour of ordinary men—can you or I, sophisticated citizen-readers, dare hope to identify ourselves?—in a time of mortal danger. With all due deference to the storm, which is the real thing, beautifully shot and cut, and makes *The Hurricane* look like something at Drury Lane; with even more deference to Jones and Fowle, whose camerawork, under obviously fantastic difficulties, is fine without being precious; with superlative deference to the G.P.O. itself, which not only paid for the film but also provided the intricacies of the ship-to-shore wireless service on which the whole story revolves; with deference in fact to all the people and things who helped, it is really in the direction of the dialogue sequences, in studio or on location, that the major importance of the film resides.

A new style emerges, and a new technique. The actors act, but they are not actors; the director interferes with the most intimate realities, and yet by the imposition of his own ideas achieves a reality more vivid still. Here is a line of action which should, and I hope will, mean a new injection of life into the inert and comatose brainpans of the British studios. There are hundreds of similar subjects to hand, the box-office receipts are assured, and the public will be getting something it really wants.

It is significant that adverse criticism of *North Sea* directs itself almost entirely against those sequences least concerned with human intimacies. True, the overslow opening of the film, and the occasional overplaying of the dramatic hand, as in the black-pudding sequence, are more personal. But the major faults, such as the underdeveloped fishing sequence, the embarrassing Sunday hymn-singing (if religion had to be used, need it have been so sentimentally C. of E., with all the grim richness of Covenanting Scotland at Watt's disposal), and the final sequence of all—a sort of tacked-on advert for the Post Office which almost (it cannot entirely, thank goodness) destroys the drama of the last shot of the film, when the radio-operator tunes back to his routine work—all these do not affect the main importance, nor do they ultimately invalidate the fierce human appeal which I hope the public, the producers, and the exhibitors will actively remember. I for one have seen few things so dramatic as the skipper asking for a salvage tug after his aerial has, unknown to him, been destroyed; he speaks, urgently but without panic, to a wilderness of sea and sky and to an unresponsive ether, while the ship rolls and creaks beneath him with a renewed menace in her clogged and damaged innards.

ONE would have been glad to see *Yellow Jack* treated in the same way, for it deals with a subject of more than equal importance and wider implications. It is the story of the men who made possible, through their researches and practical work in Cuba, the building of the Panama Canal, by the stamping out of yellow fever. Until it could be proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the infection could be carried only by a stegomyia mosquito which had previously bitten an infected person, there was no way of preventing the wiping out of whole communities, towns and districts with the suddenness and finality of one of Egypt's plagues. It is a really exciting story, first, in terms of detection and the elimination of all suspects save one, and secondly of the proof, to achieve which a band of army volunteers must risk their lives by exposing themselves to every form of aggravated infection.

Bob Montgomery, retaining his Irish accent from *Night Must Fall*, is the chief volunteer, and indulges in an incredibly silly and tenuous love affair with the local nurse, none other than the beauteous Virginia Bruce in a welter of starch, stripes and blondeness. This you see, is where Hollywood comes a cropper, by its inability to realise that it is no good bill-posting a love affair on to the backside of a script about scientific research and heroism; it must either be an integral part of the plot, or scrapped without compunction. *Yellow Jack* is, in general, not a well made film; much of it is slow, undistinguished, and clogged with bad dialogue. But it does make the grade when the scientific story is allowed to come to the fore, because the presentation is sufficiently sincere to give us a sense of the implications of the work, and because of the brilliant shooting of the villain stegomyia itself, which whizzes in a sinister fashion across the screen, and, magnified to the nth degree, injects its fatal cargo into the skin of research doctor and humble soldier alike.

A CROP of COMEDIES

Marion Fraser reviews 'Professor Beware,' 'Thank Evans' and 'Swiss Miss.'

THREE comedy features are running in the West End: *Professor Beware*, *Thank Evans* and *Swiss Miss*. Harold Lloyd, Max Miller and Laurel and Hardy are the comedians concerned. The humour in all three films depends on the reaction of the individuals to awkward or unpleasant situations, but the American pictures have the added attraction of large doses of slapstick. The British picture is therefore much more dependent on its characterization. It is to Max Miller's credit that he does a sufficiently good job to bring his picture into fair competition with the other two.

To take the oldest-timer first, Harold Lloyd repeats the set-up that he has used consistently in his past films. It is as follows: A rather simple young man gets into trouble, falls in love and performs various miracles of courage and physical endurance in order to win the girl. This theme is tagged on quite legitimately to a convenient setting. In this case Harold Lloyd is an Egyptologist who is led to believe that he is living over again the life of a figure in Egyptian mythology. The situations which this lay-out allows for are imaginative but not as funny as one could hope, and Harold Lloyd has made this type of picture much better before. However the final slapstick sequence when the hero is proving his valour makes up to a large extent, for Lloyd is as athletic as ever and though his exploits are not hair-raising they are sufficiently impossible to be exciting.

THE Max Miller picture is more close to reality. Evans is a racing tipster whose eloquence is the same, off the track or on. The characters that surround him are as exaggerated as his own portrayal of the tipster and if one accepts the music-hall tradition there is nothing to stop one from having a good deal of enjoyment from the film. *Thank Evans* should appeal to British audiences. Its humour is sufficiently broad and its technique sufficiently good to make a fair-minded audience overlook its British origin. It moves fast and the dialogue is competent.

We have seen a good deal less of Max Miller on the screen than any of the other comedians mentioned here. His particular contribution is unlike theirs in almost every respect, but he does bring a freshness to film comedy that need not be overlooked when assessing the value of the current British product. We can certainly stand more of him.

LAUREL and Hardy have departed from their usual style in their new full-length film *Swiss Miss*. The antics of the two are woven into a musical comedy background. There is a slight plot which allows for the entrances and exits of the comedians and serves the useful purpose of providing sets, characters and chorus. Otherwise the plot is of practically no importance or interest. I say 'practically' because I wish to make an exception in the case of Eric Blore, although his genius has not been used to the fullest advantage.

Laurel and Hardy and their producers seem to have had a hard time deciding whether the feature-length film was a fit vehicle. *Swiss Miss* appears to be a fresh attempt at solving this problem, but it is not nearly such a successful effort as *Way Out West*.

Several of the individual episodes are as good as any that have appeared in the Laurel and Hardy films. There is a mousetrap demonstration when Laurel bores holes in the floor of a cheese factory and accidentally opens up a gas main. The holes, of course, are for the non-existent mice. Unfortunately Laurel sets the gas alight and flames use the exits provided by the mouseholes—to the detriment of Hardy's pants. The flames are driven back and each hole carefully corked up. But there is the inevitable disaster when all the corks blow out at once.

Laurel is given the stage to himself in a magnificent sequence when he tries to rob a St. Bernard dog of the case of brandy he carries round his neck. After many efforts to persuade the reluctant dog to part with the brandy he fakes a snow storm with chicken feathers. The dog comes dutifully to the rescue, and Laurel becomes gloriously drunk. In this condition he joins Hardy in transporting a piano across a swinging bridge to a mountain-top chalet. The terrors of the crossing are intensified by the sudden appearance of an enormous monkey. Disaster is again inevitable. The piano and the monkey are hurled into the ravine as the bridge collapses, while Laurel and Hardy save themselves in the clumsiest manner possible.

These are but samples of episodes which are carefully distributed throughout the film. The intervals between are neither long nor particularly tedious, but I would like to make a strong protest as I prefer my Laurel-and-Hardy neat. The intervals appear to me useless padding, for one thing; old-fashioned technique, for another.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by

H. E. BLYTH

The Adventures of Robin Hood

(Michael Curtiz and William Keighley—Warner Brothers.)
Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone, Claude Rains, Ian Hunter, Olivia de Havilland.

There are certain essentials that must be found in any story of Robin Hood if the teller expects to be heard. The thickets must be bright with spring, the forest must be large and indeed illimitable, the deer must run, there must be bows and arrows, and Robin himself must be conducting a one-man revolution against iniquitous sheriffs, bishops and prince-regents. The last of these features is doubtless the quintessential one. The setting can vary with the episodes, but Robin cannot cease from the fight he wages—he and his merry band—against gold braid and money bags.

Warner Brothers have put everything into *The Adventures of Robin Hood* that was necessary, and a few more things for good luck. The forest of the film is perhaps a shade too pretty, what with technicolor and all; the people, both of low and of high degree, look as clean as a Newport picnic crowd; and the costumes of the nobles, whether in a great hall or among the mighty trunks of oaks and beeches, have an unvarying splendour at which the eye loses strength at last to gaze. There will, of course, be a difference of opinion on this point; nor am I denying that *The Adventures of Robin Hood* is one of the prettiest things I have ever watched. To my taste, however, it has been overpolished, and it is too clean. Hollywood can learn something from Europe about the convincingness of a little disarray, a little honest disorder. I remember, for example, a Czechoslovakian film of more than a year ago which handled the Robin Hood theme with no prettiness at all.

Janosik pushed on, to be sure, to a tragic conclusion; the hero, captured and condemned to die by impalement, leapt against the hook as he finished a wild song of freedom. But that is irrelevant to my point, which is that the background everywhere was trying to be veritable, and succeeding because nothing real had been removed from the camera's vision. Warner Brothers have swept their forest till it is as neat as a nut; the roadways look like bridle-paths; and many of the merry men bring the air of the costume chamber with them to the picked trees they will climb.

Janosik conducted its one-man revolution also in a more plausible spirit. The audience never forgot that the hero was in great and indeed terrible danger. If *The Adventures of Robin Hood* arouses no anxiety in its spectators, the excuse might be that it is comedy whereas *Janosik* was tragedy. But Errol Flynn is perhaps too obviously safe at all times—even in a great hall full of nobles he has only to hack his way out or to push convenient

"One of the prettiest things . . ."

tables in front of giants in red robes coming to crush him. At the gallows, in the greenwood, or fencing for his life with Sir Guy of Gisborne (Basil Rathbone), he has luck too visibly with him, he too plainly cannot lose. This means that the essential theme tends to disappear among a series of gay episodes—not quite as gay, either, as they would have been had Douglas Fairbanks returned to clown the fable. For Errol Flynn is not trying to be Douglas Fairbanks; he is trying to be romantic; and I think he would have been more so had he been able to make us catch our breath two or three times.

But the film is better than I have said. It is really charming; Claude Rains is an accomplished Prince John; and the recognition of King Richard (Ian Hunter) by Robin Hood is a great moment. *Robin Hood* has a whole summer before it, and I do not doubt that it will beautify the green season.

—Mark Van Doren, *The Nation*

Odd what makes a picture. The marquee glares with the names of Olivia de Havilland, Errol Flynn, Claude Rains, Basil Rathbone and nowhere will you find a two inch credit for the colour. This film would be dull, flat, and I'm sure unprofitable but for the work of one Carl Jules Weyle—if I've got the right man. He's listed as art director. For it is only the brilliant, amazingly versatile use of colour that puts suspense and excitement into *Robin Hood*. One is led from scene to scene wondering what new splash of tint and texture will be revealed, instead of wondering whether Robin will be captured. Not since that first great splurge, *Becky Sharpe*, has Technicolor been used to such effect. And this has twenty memorable colour compositions, for every one in *Becky Sharp*.

—Meyer Levin, *Esquire*

A Slight Case of Murder

(Lloyd Bacon—First National)
Edward G. Robinson, Allen Jenkins, Ruth Donnelly.

Accepting the hypothesis of the cheapness and unimportance of human life among racketeers, it is right and proper that nothing but fun is extracted from the corpses of four poker-playing bandits; but only with such a background is that possible. First, how they are shot, and next, how the bodies are disposed of, form the basis of this really amusing fantasy, where the stage attains a degree of acceptable unreality beyond any of the Restoration plays of which Lamb wrote. The whole company throws itself into the spirit of this deplorable embroilment, from the four men so slightly murdered, and their murderer, to that paragon of dignity and virtue Mr. Whitewood. But best of all is Robinson, as Marco the beer baron.

—E. V. L., *Punch*

The evolution of the thriller and gangster-drama is surely one of the most curious manifestations of public taste in entertainment. Time was when the murder, without which no thriller is complete, raised a shudder, and even wholesale killings seemed grim. We have altered all that. Corpses nowadays are comic, and dying men a joke. I find it difficult to control an old-fashioned squeamishness when it comes to carting dead men about like sacks of potatoes, and laughing at death. Yet *A Slight Case of Murder*, based on a play by Damon Runyon and Howard Lindsay, is,

on the whole, a very funny combination of the thriller and the gangster-play, and Edward G. Robinson as a beer baron, doing his best to be "legitimate" after the repeal of Prohibition laws, dominates the complicated and hectic action with a grand study of a rogue trying to be respectable. This murder-thriller-gangster farce contains a great deal of ingenuity, of entertaining characterisation, and hilarious situations.

—Michael Orme, *The Sketch*

Three Comrades

(Frank Borzage—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Robert Taylor, Franchot Tone, Robert Young, Margaret Sullavan

Remarque's story of the three German war veterans who sought to find again the way to peace, and of the tubercular girl who loved one of them and died gallantly as their love was cresting, had, of course, the stuff of a gossamer tragedy. Its literary translation to the screen preserved the novel's spirit admirably. The players, beginning with Margaret Sullavan as the frail but dauntless Pat, through Franchot Tone's sincere and strong portrait of Otto and Robert Young's facile playing of the idealistic Gottfried, to Robert Taylor's actually quite acceptable Erich (either Mr. Taylor is improving or we are losing our grip)—the players, again, are remarkably right. But still it must be counted Mr. Borzage's picture. For he has interwoven its materials so deftly, has marshalled his players so capably, has used his cameras, lights and sets so persuasively that the film is all unity—a poetic, poignant, heart-breaking whole.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Three Comrades is a version of Remarque's study of post-war Germany. Three war-time pals stick together in the peace, run a garage, and make friends with a gay but very frail girl, who marries one of them and shortly afterwards dies in a sanatorium. Frank Borzage would, I believe, have made a fine thing out of this study of social unrest had he not been defeated by the uncompromising Americanism of his cast. Not for a moment, in spite of tinkling folk-songs and a café-proprietor stuffed with *Stimmung*, do they contrive to suggest Germany; but Margaret Sullavan and Franchot Tone play with such quiet sincerity that while they are on the screen the film comes to life. With the appearance of Robert Taylor it quickly dies again; he seems, at any rate in this film, to have no conception of character at all; it is just Lee Sheridan all over again. When he was engaged to play in it, the film should have been renamed *A Yank at the Tankstelle*.

—Peter Galway, *The New Statesman and Nation*

Critical Summary

This is just the kind of film that splits critical opinion. The sentimentalist weeps, the cynic sneers, while the green intellectual discovers in a few inches of the film the point of a lifetime. But whoever is justified in his attitude, all will combine in their attack upon the director; the sentimentalist because of the unhappy ending which puts an end to the osculatory display between Mr. Robert Taylor and Miss Margaret Sullavan; the cynic because the man of the world (Mr. Franchot Tone) is allowed to become a man of another and a more romantic one; and the green intellectual because the few inches of ill-digested thought have not been turned into the standard length by which he can judge all successors. The man in a bowler hat, with pince-nez and umbrella, will pay his half-crown, weep, sneer, and talk philosophy when he gets home.

W.F.N. Selection

North Sea	*	*	*
The River	*	*	*
A Slight Case of Murder	*	*	*
Design for Living	*	*	
Yellow Jack	*		
A Farewell to Arms	*		

Other Films covered in this issue:

The Adventures of Robin Hood (stars reserved)

The Private Life of Henry VIII

Professor Beware

Thank Evans

Swiss Miss

Three Comrades

Port of Seven Seas

Joy of Living

You and Me

Women are Like That

The Thirteen

Orage

L'homme du Jour

Port of Seven Seas

(James Whale—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Wallace Beery, Frank Morgan, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Beal.

A fine play frequently becomes an unworthy film. A sad example of this occasional corruption of excellent dramatic matter may be seen in *Port of Seven Seas*. Some few years ago a distinguished French playwright, Marcel Pagnol, wrote a series of plays around the Port of Marseilles. They were notable for the fidelity of atmosphere they achieved and for the creation of certain character types only to be found in that particular place, in that especial country and at that precise moment. "Marius," "Fanny" and "César" achieved, between them, something beyond the wit of Hollywood to provide, that lovely gift bestowed so generously upon the French film industry—viz., Truth. *Port of Seven Seas* is the saddening failure of falsity.

This simple and heartbreaking story, in itself quite credible and touching, becomes a jumble of transatlantic sentiment and of crude playing on the heartstrings. Wallace Beery and Frank Morgan are both fiercely determined to earn their salaries; only the actor who plays Marius, Mr. John Beal, touches anything like the root of the matter.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

It may be suspected that in the play by M. Marcel Pagnol, from which the film is derived, the plot was merely the pretext for some typical sketches of French family life. Such sketches might readily have lent themselves to French acting, but, as with so many American films based on French plays, the acting proves to be unsuited to the material. The plot is of the simplest—it tells of a young man's passion for the sea and the misfortune which befell the girl to whom he was betrothed. With American treatment, however, there appears to be insufficient light and shade, and the outlines take on an unnatural hardness. The scenes in the Marseilles café between the father of the young man and the old chandler, who lends the respectability of his name to the girl's illegitimate child, miss the light vivacity which is one of the secrets of French acting. Mr. Wallace Beery, without the adroit gestures and expressive silences which the part of the young man's father seems to require, falls into sentimentality, while Mr. Frank Morgan also allows falsity to creep into the eloquence of the friendly chandler. The scenes on the waterfront are well organised and photographed.

—*The Times*

Joy of Living

(Tay Garnett—R.K.O. Radio)
Irene Dunne, Douglas Fairbanks, Jnr.

Another of those loony shows, with Irene Dunne playing a hard-working, family ridden prima donna of the stage, and Douglas Fairbanks, Jnr., playing a philosophical gay blade who tries to save her from herself. Like most of the current comedies, it has scenes that are funny and good. Also like most of them, it lacks punch as comic entity. Miss Dunne, as in *The Awful Truth*, is delightfully giddy as the heroine. Fairbanks is arrogant when he should be sympathetic, ill-at-ease when he should be clownish. He sounds and acts a great deal like Ronald Colman five-eighths of the time, which may account for this. The beer-garden and roller-skating sequences are best for all-round laughs. *Good fun.*

—*Stage*

"Screenplay by Gene Towne, Graham Baker, and Allan Scott based on an original story by Dorothy and Herbert Fields." Frankly, between the five of them, we feel that somebody might have produced an idea.

Joy of Living—cont.

Miss Irene Dunne is a talented and versatile actress with a fine sense of comedy and burlesque and a pleasant singing voice; so when it comes to writing a story for her, an especial effort should be made. But Messrs. Towne, Baker, Scott and Fields have between them failed to produce a real plot, and not even the co-operation of Miss Dorothy has saved the day. Somebody, in a moment of inspiration, thought of giving Miss Dunne a drunk scene admittedly, but then that isn't really so very original; the fact that it is highly entertaining is entirely due to Miss Dunne, who hiccups with more glamour than any one we can ever remember having seen previously. Chief honours must go to Mr. Jerome Kern (lyrics by Miss Dorothy Fields, who evidently pulled her weight), and it is Mr. Kern's music that saves this picture from being, at times, perilously near to boring—and that is a hard thing to say in connection with Miss Dunne.

—H. E. Blyth, *World Film News*

A Farewell to Arms

(Frank Borzage—Paramount) (Revival)
Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes.

As one might have expected there is no very close relation between this film and Mr. Ernest Hemingway's novel, although the main progress of the story is kept intact. But it sometimes provides an ingenious equivalent for Mr. Hemingway's special qualities, and, almost to the end, preserves something of that admirable detachment which allows him to describe the most difficult emotions. Like so many other old films which have recently been revived, it wears remarkably well, and it is interesting to compare Mr. Frank Borzage's restrained and purposeful handling of this story with his fumbling approach to sentiment in the most recent example of his work, *Three Comrades*. There is sentiment in *A Farewell to Arms*, but it is sentiment which fulfils its purpose by demonstrating the terrible futility of war. There is no actual climax; the grim inevitability of catastrophe is inexorably conveyed. The alterations in the plot, many of which have obviously been made in the interests of speed, occasionally bring in a touch of melodrama, and if there are obscurities it is no doubt the censor, rather than the director, who is to blame. Mr. Hemingway's unemphatic irony is only momentarily apparent, but Mr. Borzage could hardly have been expected to discover in the film a medium so readily adaptable to irony, emphatic or unemphatic, as the written word. Mr. Gary Cooper and Miss Helen Hayes are careful not to give to the parts of the soldier and the nurse their own extraneous observations, and they both make a gallant, though unsuccessful attempt to endow their parts with that curious subdued patter which was the medium through which the author controlled the emotions of his characters. The strong physical flavour of the book is curiously absent, but this is not altogether a serious disadvantage.

—*The Times*

You and Me

(Fritz Lang—Paramount)
Sylvia Sidney, George Raft.

I don't think there has ever been another picture like *You and Me*. This is not an exclamation of unqualified approval, however: I merely mean that *You and Me* is the weirdest cinematic hash I ever saw. To describe it as simply as possible, it is a naïve morality play with impressionistic Teutonic overtones by Fritz Lang and Kurt Weill. The lesson we learn from *You and Me* is that crime does not pay. This is brought home to us, not by any such relatively indirect means as showing a criminal coming to a bad end, but by a chalk talk (exactly that—a lecture at a blackboard) in which Sylvia Sidney proves to an abashed group of thugs surprised *flagrante delicto* that the financial return to them from a theft of thirty thousand dollars' worth of goods is one hundred and thirteen dollars and some odd cents. They reform. Parole violation is dealt with at length in *You and Me*. George Raft and Miss Sidney are both paroled convicts who get into simply awful trouble because they marry. Fritz Lang has whipped up a couple of eerie little episodes dealing in a vague way with crime and punishment, but totally unrelated to the pedestrian plot which keeps Miss Sidney and Mr. Raft so busy.

—Russell Maloney, *The New Yorker*

American critics in general slammed this production, but I think it is a fine effort, full of human insight and cinematic quality. Mr. Lang's theme is that crime doesn't pay, neither in a moral nor monetary sense. His background is a big store, the proprietor of which takes ex-convicts as assistants, to give them a new start. Two of them marry. The man tells the girl about his past, but she doesn't tell him about hers, and from that poignant situation Mr. Lang spins a narrative of shrewd suspense and keen crisis, heightened here and there with those touches of symbolical sound and imagery in which he excels. A little pretentious at times, perhaps, but the emotions ring true, especially when they are in the care of Vera Gordon, superb actress too infrequently seen in these days. Even Sylvia Sidney forgets her mincing manner, and George Raft acts with a simple directness that wins sympathy from the start.

The bunch of ex-convicts are gems of characterisation, especially one who shows a customer how a patent tin-opener works and uses the technique of a safe-breaker to do it! There is a sub-plot to the effect that women marry only rotters or weaklings, but we won't go into that. It may be too true.

—G. A. Atkinson, *The Sunday Referee*

"No conception of character at all . . ."

Women Are Like That

(Stanley Logan—First National)
Kay Francis, Pat O'Brien.

Women Are Like That discusses the place of feminine intuition in business, the problems of an advertising agency, the claims of home life, the jealousy of husbands, the snare of independence, and this and that aspect of careers for women. Miss Kay Francis and Mr. Pat O'Brien are the principal speakers, and the motion for love is carried *nem. con.*

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

All the characters in this film work in an advertising agency, but unfortunately this is no more than a background for their quarrels and love-affairs, and for a story about a husband and wife (Mr. Pat O'Brien and Miss Kay Francis) who are each in turn mortified when the other succeeds in business. There is, in fact, only just enough about their occupation to show what an amusing film this might have been, if it had told us more about advertising and in a more satirical vein. As it is the plot is reasonably neat and the hysteria of the chief characters well described, but perhaps the most amusing incident is an unscrupulous competition between husband and wife for a contract. But even here, and in one or two similar incidents, the ordinary manœuvres of commercial competition are grossly exaggerated in the interests of entertainment. One has the impression that the story has been worked out by people who know their subject but have been afraid of producing what would surely have been much better entertainment—a documentary film.

—*The Times*

Design for Living

(Ernst Lubitsch—Paramount) (Revival)
Fredric March, Gary Cooper, Miriam Hopkins, Edward Everett Horton.

Noel Coward wrote this comedy about two men and a girl. The polyandric theme was too much for the English censor of stage productions, so we never saw Coward's play here. But when Ben Hecht had broadened it in the writing and Lubitsch had added his subtleties in direction it became permissible in the cinema. This is rather strange, for the inescapable point, rewrite it how you will, is that a girl loves two men who are close friends, walks out on both when the fight starts, marries elsewhere, and in the end they all decide to resume the threesome formation. It is the most tenuous of themes, but Lubitsch and Hecht make it all very amusing. From the audience's point of view it becomes very difficult (and rightly) to take sides because the men are Gary Cooper and Fredric March. The poor (?) girl is Miriam Hopkins. As entertainment to-day I would bracket it with the latest Lubitsch, *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, with extra marks for dialogue.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

It is, of course, a sophisticated comedy in which Gary Cooper, Fredric March and Miriam Hopkins, playing the rôles of Bohemians, try to solve a sex problem of two boys and one girl by means of "a gentleman's agreement"—with Edward Everett Horton to prove that the solution is not a bad idea when viewed comparatively. The acting is excellent and the dialogue as gay and pointed to-day as it was when it was first made. How much of it is the original Noel Coward and how much was written in during the adaptation I do not know, but I do know that the standard throughout is good enough to be distinguished as Coward's best. Lubitsch, of course, directed it and gave it a delicate flippancy, and a smooth pace with great polish.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Critical Summary.

Any true estimate of Mr. Noel Coward is obviously a venturesome proceeding at this stage, for Mr. Noel Coward still sharpens his wit on the absurdities and not on the cruelly fallacious. He enters the stately homes of England with a latchkey of his own manufacture, and dusts the characters of yesterday with the cheaply cynical brush of to-day. His wit may sparkle but it seldom illumines, and though the fluidity of the screen glosses over the defects of his imagination and the paucity of his ideas, the natural progression of his talent may well be arrested before it has become valuable.

Private Life of Henry VIII

(Alexander Korda—London Films) (Revival)
Charles Laughton, Robert Donat, Binnie Barnes, Wendy Barrie, Elsa Lanchester.

I always thought that *The Private Life of Henry VIII* was overpraised. Having seen the film again I withdraw that opinion. It is a far better picture than *La Kermesse Héroïque*. Its humour is broad and vulgar, its settings are beautiful and its script is a piece of excellent writing. It was a firm foundation on which Alexander Korda was to build London Films. In this film you see the screen beginnings of Robert Donat, Binnie Barnes, Merle Oberon, Wendy Barrie, Judy Kelly, Elsa Lanchester, and realise the soundness of Korda's judgment. I was curious to see them all again, but I remained to enjoy a picture as entertaining now as it was five years ago. I had forgotten Ann of Cleves among the sunflowers, and the card game on the royal wedding night, Henry's vigil as Katheryn Howard faced the headsman, and Lady Tree's portrait of the old nurse. I had forgotten, also, the ending, when Charles Laughton, beady-eyed, parchment-faced, nibbles a chicken bone and looking directly at the camera says "Six wives and the best is the worst."

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

The Thirteen

(Michael Romm—Russian)
I. Novoseltsev, Kuzmina, A. Chistyakov, A. Feit, I. Kutnetsov.

In recent years the Russian film has tended to turn away from blatant propaganda and, in this film, its urgent message of co-operative service is expressed in terms which even the pacifist may well applaud. The co-operative service spreads its ideals over all departments of Russian life. Here it is not the fortitude of the proletariat but the calm endurance of the soldier that makes this study in heroism impressive. Across the Central Asian desert come not the invading capitalist but ten men bound for civil life after having guarded their frontier in the uniform of the Red Army. The ten men, who are joined by a geologist, a neighbour commander and his wife, never suggest that they have been chosen for their "photogenic" qualities; yet their faces are arresting in their individual expressions. We know them as men as soon as they appear, and the subsequent development of the plot, which imprisons them in a fort, not through monarchial decree but through their own humanitarian impulse to rid their country of banditry, merciless in its predatory raids, is unfolded with care and precision. The odds are great and the survival of only one man to relate the calm heroism of the defenders is no dramatic overture but a simple testimony to a service which needs no propaganda for recruits.

—Anon, *World Film News*

Orage

(Marc Allegret—French)
Charles Boyer, Michèle Morgan.

Orage is just a study of love, delirious, unhappy love, between a girl and a married man thrown together somewhere in the French countryside. Beautifully played by Michèle Morgan and Charles Boyer, it turns out to be one of the season's most haunting pictures. The love scenes give you a guilty sense that you are spying on something secret. The man's bewitched passion for the girl, and, at the same time, his odd tenderness for his wife are delicately and movingly done. From beginning to end there is not one moment of strain; the thing is as inevitable as the opening and fading of a rose. See it, please. It is one of those rare, personal experiences in the cinema that are altogether too good to miss.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

L'homme du Jour

(Julien Duvivier—French)
Maurice Chevalier, Elvire Popesco, Alerme.

M. Duvivier, who gave us the brilliant *Pépé Le Moko*, now gives us *L'homme du Jour*, a comparatively slight but intensely Parisian little tale of an electrician who gave a blood-transfusion to a famous actress and so became Front Page News for a couple of days. This, of course, proved fatal for the type of swaggering young man so well played by M. Maurice Chevalier. He lost his job in the hope of becoming an actor, and lost or nearly lost his sweetheart who had been stricken by a similar ambition. I should like to praise this plain, appealing little girl's performance, and still more the brilliantly absurd portrait of a famous actress who looks and behaves like a youngish and ravishing mixture of Bernhardt, Cécile Sorel, and Mistinguette, spouts fervent Racine, and prattles deliriously when she comes out of her anæsthesia of having slept between Shakespeare and Goethe.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

L'homme du Jour seems to me a minor Duvivier, just a good sketch, hardly more, of what this really great director can do for us. M. Chevalier is the man of the day, a theatre electrician who saves the life of a front-page star and becomes, for his golden hour, the Wonder Hero of the Boulevards. The film has a faint bitter-sweet quality, like a well-mixed gin-and-lime, and pleasant fancies, such as the scene in which M. Chevalier, the electrician, calls on M. Chevalier, the actor, in his dressing-room and sings "Prosper" with him to the voice of M. Chevalier on a gramophone record. I don't think M. Chevalier is quite the subtlest film actor Duvivier has ever handled, and I don't think M. Duvivier is quite at his happiest when dealing with the life of the theatre, but all the common, everyday things are nicely done, and most of the little people, the flower girl, and the boarders, and the Paris workmen are vigorously alive and true.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

Like the present Australian Test team now in England, the French team of directors is getting all the publicity, and no player or director seems capable of letting his side down. M. Julien Duvivier may be said to be the McCabe of the French team, a stylist who can make his nonchalant hundred or content himself with a modest 28. *In "L'homme du Jour" it is the low score that the spectator sees on the board, but the celluloid runs have been sparklingly compiled. M. Chevalier has returned to the team and the French wickets are less sticky than those of Hollywood.*

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North Sea

PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Film Unit
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCER: A. Cavalcanti
DIRECTOR: Harry Watt, A.R.F.P.
PHOTOGRAPHY: Fowle and Jones

North Sea is a distinct advance on anything of the kind we have seen in this type of film.

It tells the story of the work done by the Post Office radio stations around the coast in looking after our shipping, and the radio workers and fishermen who appear are shown at the tasks which occupy them every day. No professional actors or actresses were employed.

Hitherto documentaries have been films with commentaries to explain them. This one explains itself and gives a thrilling picture of one of the thousands of dramas that go on in everyday life. —*The Star*

I can only give you a pale equivalent in words of the thrill of this picture, which gets its drama from bare unadornment, from sheer fact clearly stated. It is only fair to add, though, that much of the charm comes from the sound of the Scottish voices, which supply that touch of romance, of strangeness, that one aches for at times in documentaries. It has sometimes seemed to me the weakness of English realist pictures that, with all their honesty, they are a little afraid of beauty. It is a form of self-consciousness that has kept us out of the front rank of many arts, and it alarms me to see its hold on the better makers of our cinema. Fine words are not sentimental, and can only add to the stature of the speaker. We shall never be a first-class film-making country until we dare to be fine.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Nothing more interesting has ever been shown than this vivid narrative plucked from the heart of deep-sea fishery, with the stamp of authenticity in every foot.

It speaks for itself in the most thrilling pictorial sense of the term.

—*Sunday Referee*

Sincere compliments to the G.P.O. Film Unit for their vivid little documentary *North Sea*. For this especial sort of short, telling the story as it does of the Post Office radio stations without the help of a single professional actor, no praise can be high enough. It is a tale of the common enough discharge of responsible duties under trying conditions, and is far more satisfactory to watch than many an invented narrative.

—*The Sunday Times*

An outstanding instance of the documentary film, the subject is cordially recommended as a worthy addition to any bill.

—*To-day's Cinema*

North Sea may well claim to be considered as the most progressive step in documentary films since Mr. Basil Wright, Mr. Harry Watt, and M. Cavalcanti made their by now famous picture of the Postal Service, *Night Mail*, in 1936. But it would be wrong to estimate *North Sea* in terms of the documentary film alone. By its fictional story as well as by its characterization, and in spite of its relatively small cost of production, it claims to be measured against the story-films of the studios. Its place of showing should be the cinemas and not the lecture halls of the country. —*The Times*

North Sea is easily the best thing the G.P.O. Film Unit have so far done, it is a simple thirty-minute documentary describing life on a deep sea trawler from Aberdeen. But into the pictures of sea, land and sky, Alberto Cavalcanti, the producer, has caught a harsh and rugged beauty of a sort that more sophisticated cameras range the world for. To all who love the sea and the uncomplaining men who go down to her in ships, this film will make an undeniable appeal.

—*Time and Tide*

By filming *You and Me* Fritz Lang has, we are told, made a "powerful and thought-provoking drama". But its shallowness is shown up by a picture which is in the same programme—the noble *North Sea*. This is the film produced by Cavalcanti for the G.P.O., which tells how ship-to-shore radio safeguards the lives of North Sea fishermen. It uses the gale of February, 1937, to supply the incident from which great drama is made. *North Sea* has greatness by virtue of its worthy handling of fine material, and in this three-reel film may be found the essentials of a work of art.

—R. H., *The Manchester Guardian*

It is, in fact, a vivid little everyday drama of the perils of the deep, photographed in mountainous seas at real risk, and revealing the modest courage and humour of fishermen, with an insight into the valuable use of shore radio. A magnificent documentary. One touch of fiction would have ruined it. My only carp is that the shots of heavy seas are cut too short; I had no time to get my optical sea-legs. —*Daily Herald*

The River

PRODUCTION: U.S. Farm Security Administration
DISTRIBUTION: Unity Films
DIRECTOR: Pare Lorentz
PHOTOGRAPHY: Stacy Woodard, Floyd Crosby, Willard Van Dyke
NARRATION: Written by Pare Lorentz Spoken by Thomas Chalmers

The River presents to us in unforgettable terms the size, the beauty and the problems of the Mississippi. It forms a powerful indictment of laisser-faire, even in the field of pioneer development. We are shown the great cities built along the river banks, heedlessly and "at what a cost", as the commentator continually repeats. The top-soil of the greatest valley in the world was carelessly squandered; "we have taken the top off the Alleghenies, and sent it down to the Gulf of Mexico". *The River* uses an extension of March of Time technique to explain the causes and cure of erosion and floods; but what captivates us is the pictorial beauty of these long low horizons and enormous expanses of swirling water. The floods are so wonderfully photographed that it is difficult to remember that they were no spectacle, but a gigantic national disaster. The film, which is shown free all over America, was made by Pare Lorentz.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

This is a documentary film issued by the Government of the U.S.A. and perhaps one of the most dramatic pictures which the screen has ever shown. It is the story of the Mississippi which collects into itself two-thirds of all the rivers in the United States before it empties into the Gulf of Mexico . . . and it is the story of exploitation and ruin. . . . "One hundred cities and a thousand towns" were built out of the ruthless profits of those who cleared the hills of timber and the earth of its richness but "at what a cost". Millions of tons of soil, the richest in the world, swept into the Gulf of Mexico, for the forests which held back and grew upon its waters were not; the natural restraints had been removed. —*The Weekly Review*

The River well deserves the chorus of praise evoked by its private showing. Here, again, drama and the human note transform a documentary subject into gripping entertainment. This Pare Lorentz picture tells the story of the Mississippi, of the cotton fields along its banks, and the timber on its upper reaches. Warm, flood and axe have turned field and forest into arid wastes, and the accumulating waters, with neither soil nor root to absorb them, swell the mighty river until thousands of miles of "levees" are constantly crumbling. The harnessing of the river and the subjugation of its power may be a problem more vital to the American than to the British public, but the whole picture has a dramatic urgency and a pictorial splendour that are of universal appeal. Sound is admirably used to heighten its drama, and a finely written commentary catches the rhythm of the rushing waters. —*The Sketch*

The film runs for barely half an hour, and Lorentz, I think, might well have allowed himself rather longer for the story covering so broad a sweep of time and space. But if his treatment is at some times so sketchy, he gets over some unforgettably graphic impressions of human effects struggling with natural forces, and his commentary is exceptionally good—not merely a description but rather the voice of the film itself made audible. *The River* is less humanly vivid than *North Sea*, but in its own way hardly less moving.

—*The Yorkshire Post*

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Basil Clavering writes on

MOVIE THEATRE MANAGEMENT

OBVIOUSLY, Mr. Ricketson, in setting out to write his "Management of Motion Picture Theatres" (McGraw Hill Book Co., 21*s*.), had in mind a momentous work, an "Encyclopædia Motionpictaticus", if one may coin a phrase.

It is no mean compliment to him that he has shrunk his work into 376 pages, excluding the covers.

He sails airily and succinctly through page after page, showing how a Cinema should be run; showing how films should be booked; showing how the staff should be managed; and giving a complete synopsis, from A to Z, of every conceivable query, and, at one point, daring to suggest that the Exhibitor might offer less than 50 per cent. and get away with it.

Much of the matter will be foreign to the Picture Theatre Manager in this country. Here, we are not concerned with Block Booking, nor do we have Complimentary Tickets with a blatant "For Police Protection" printed on them. Here, also, we are blessed with such institutions as the London County Council, which, although admittedly slower than the proverbial tortoise, at least hatches an excellent set of rules and regulations, which is more than Mr. Ricketson would have us believe they possess in the United States.

The most refreshing paragraph appears on page 125, which states: "The Manager is the sole judge of the programme make-up. It is his privilege and right to eliminate anything from the feature or short subjects which appears objectionable, or which does not have entertainment value." The writer of this review has several times attempted this, only to have the Renter screaming down the telephone as to why his film has been mutilated. It has been useless to explain that we were attempting to improve a picture that was never anything else but mutilated.

We are given an enlightening glimpse of showmanship in America, especially as to such stunts as lotteries, which, unfortunately, are not allowed in a country which paradoxically allows betting on horses. But Mr. Ricketson is too set on his rules of programme presentation. Practice has proved that the way to whip an audience to attention is not to present a programme week after week, in a 1, 2, 3—Short—Newsreel—Feature order. Has Mr. Ricketson ever put an interesting announcement in the middle of his newsreel and watched the result?

It is pleasant to note that where the cost is justified, he considers it a better plan to have a trailer made, without pictures, for the next week's feature for each individual theatre. Who has not been nauseated at those sickening trailers that splash "Terrific"—"Tremendous"—"Gigantic" at all angles across

(Continued at foot of next column.)

Worthwhile Amateur Films at The Edinburgh Film Festival

COMPETITIONS for amateur film producers grow in number year by year. They offer prizes for the best film, the most outstanding film, the best colour film, the best photoplay, and so on. No doubt they have done much to encourage all the technical virtues of careful production, but have they done anything to guide amateurs in the choice of themes and subjects or to encourage them in the braveries of experiment?

With the latest resources of stock, cameras and equipment amateurs are now on an equal footing with the professionals. In colour work, in fact, they actually have the advantage. And to the amateurs, credit let it be said that the best of them are turning out work not far short of commercial cinema standard.

But what are they doing with their fine photography and slick cutting?

Remembering the creaking dramas and pathetic comedies of only a few years ago, it is gratifying to note the very considerable number of amateurs who are now turning to realism and documentary. A vast amount of energy is wasted on composing symphonies of the sea and moods of nature, and too little expended on the tougher material of man and his work and his problems. At the same time many sub-standard producers are making films of first-rate social value. Numerous so-called documentaries are just pretty travel pictures, but most of them at least have the cameras pointed in the right direction.

We have been telling the amateurs for long enough what to do. The time has now come for guidance, encouragement and appreciation when a sound job of work is produced.

With this end in view the Edinburgh Film Guild, in collaboration with other interested societies, is organising an Amateur Film Festival, to be held in November, "to encourage amateur cinematographers to produce films not only with good technique but with worthwhile themes dealing with contemporary affairs."

The professional realist producers are doing wonders with their limited resources in presenting on the screen various aspects of everyday life and current affairs. As it should be, their efforts are on a broad national basis. To the amateur falls the opportunity to film the local and regional scene, to depict the daily problems and pleasures as they occur in his own neighbourhood, coloured and influenced by local custom and idiosyncrasy. The raciest and most richly human contributions to literature have mostly been regional in nature. It is only an odd chance which gives us commercially a film like *North Sea*, rich in local character. In cinema, only the amateurs, it seems, can afford to be regionalists.

The prize list of the Edinburgh Amateur Film Festival (seven diplomas, seven £5 notes, and two cups) aims at inducing the amateur to turn to local subjects for inspiration. There are, for instance, prizes for a film of Edinburgh, for a film dealing with any of the properties of the National Trust for Scotland, for a film dealing with Scottish recreation, and for documentary, industrial, propaganda, news or instructional films entered from the South-East of Scotland.

Other prizes are offered for films for church purposes, for colour, and for 9.5mm films. Further evidence of the practical nature of the Festival is the nature of the award presented by Michael Powell, director of *The Edge of the World*, who invites the maker of the best-all-round film to London to act as assistant on whatever film he may be making at the time. In addition the Alan Harper Cup will be awarded for the best example of Direction and Editing.

Competitors, either individuals or clubs, may submit any number of entries and the same film can qualify for a prize in more than one section.

The adjudicators will be Harry Watt, director of *North Sea* and *Night Mail*, Professor D. Talbot Rice of the Chair of Fine Art at Edinburgh University, and Alan Harper, the Scottish documentary producer. Entry forms and full particulars may be obtained from *J. E. Rocca, Hon. Secretary, Edinburgh Amateur Film Festival*, 135 *George Street, Edinburgh*, 2.

Norman Wilson

---

the screen, just as the heroine is about to bite off the hero's ear?

"One picture is worth a thousand words", is a phrase which came from China centuries ago and which is still as true as ever;—but put the pictures on the front of the house and the mob will come in to see them come to life.

This book deals crisply and to the point with every conceivable question that can possibly crop up, including: leases, colour and lighting effects, theatre inspection, auditing and accounting, equipment, inventories, architecture, and even dissertates upon the psychological effects of various coloured posters upon various people; finishing up with a list of film-world slang and definitions, such as: "Whodunit", a critic's slang expression for a mystery film; a "Winchellism".

This volume should be a valued addition to the library of every showman in the country, because it tells him how to obtain every penny from would-be patrons, and, seemingly, the author has put his theories into practice and found them good.

The price of the book is 21*s*., which is a lot of shillings, but it is extremely good value.

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ROBERT FLAHERTY

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"This Robert Flaherty is the Robert Flaherty who made those wonderful films 'Nanook of the North' and 'The Man of Aran.' Now will you read his story ?"—*The Star.*

"No one knows the sub-Arctic better than Mr. Flaherty: he is one of the few literate men who have ever understood it."
—*Philip Jordan in the News Chronicle.*

"What a man and what a book !"—*E. Arnot Robertson.*

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"The incidents are hewn out of the hard rock of the North: their poetry is Mr. Flaherty's."
—*Times Literary Supplement.*

"It makes fascinating reading—first-rate stuff of its kind."—*Yorkshire Post.*

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The MONTH'S RELEASES

THE most striking feature about the programmes this month is the very large number of re-issues which are playing throughout the country. There has never been such a dearth of new films, but there is consolation in the fact that the re-issues are for the most part excellent films. The situation has arisen through many causes, one of the chief being the slow and difficult passage of the Quota Act through Parliament and the resulting uneasiness. This caused nearly a complete stoppage of production in this country and influenced to a certain extent the flow of production in Hollywood. But it is interesting to have a chance of seeing some of these old films again. In general they are still very good. There are, for instance, five James Cagney films, *The Public Enemy*, *Winner Take All*, *Taxi*, *Picture Snatcher* and *Mayor of Hell*, which are typical examples of the hard-hitting gangster films of several years ago. Again in *Disraeli* we have a picture which put George Arliss in the front line of screen actors. *Frankenstein* which in its time was almost a household word, and *The Invisible Man* are others

"Taxi," with James Cagney

which can be seen for a second time. Watch also for the re-issue of some of the Rudolph Valentino epics.

Releases of new films this month are headed by an unpretentious, unheralded picture, *Owd Bob*. The film stars Will Fyffe in a story of an old Scottish farmer, unable to get on with his neighbours. He keeps a sheep farm and lives with his daughter and his dog Black Wull. A young farmer arrives in the district with a fine dog, Owd Bob and takes the adjoining farm. He falls for McAdam's daughter and in the local sheep trials, his dog defeats Black Wull. This makes old McAdam, who has bet all his money on his dog, bankrupt and to cap it his dog is found to be a killer and has to be shot. However the marriage of his daughter to the young farmer and a new pup bring the old man happiness in his declining years. The highpoints are the sheep dog trials, which are shown in dramatic form, and Will Fyffe, who excels in the role of an old Scottish farmer. Katharine Hepburn has thrown dignity to the winds in *Bringing up Baby*. The comedy is fast moving, Miss Hepburn proving herself a serious rival to Miss Lombard at her own crazy game. *Vessel of Wrath* is the first production of the Laughton-Pommer combination. Charles Laughton, as the rascally beachcomber, gives a performance in the true Laughton style, and is supported by Elsa Lanchester and Robert Newton, who turns in a first-class performance as the Governor of the Island unlucky enough to house Laughton. A number of musicals are out this month. The best of the bunch is *Hollywood Hotel* with a host of stars including Dick Powell, the late Ted Healy, Edgar Kennedy and Benny Goodman. The musical numbers are excellent of their kind, and the production is lavish.

Kicking the Moon Around, with Ambrose and his Orchestra, Evelyn Dall and Harry Richman, is probably the best musical to date from British studios, and well up to Hollywood standard in cast and production.

Sonja Henie's third picture *Happy Landing* has a tendency to introduce too much spectacle and too many diversions. Miss Henie, however, skates as delightfully as ever. Jessie Matthews stars in *Sailing Along*. Victor Saville's latest production is *South Riding*, starring Ralph Richardson. The film has a story more credible than most and herein lies its strength. It is acted and directed with taste, and is spoilt only by its ridiculous closing sequence. Joan Crawford appears in M.G.M.'s *Mannequin* with Spencer Tracy. The film has the old story of the poor girl marrying into high society, being disillusioned and finally returning to marry a boy of her own class. Not even the direction of Frank Borzage, and the acting of Spencer Tracy can lift this film out of the mediocre class. Another M.G.M. offering is *Arsène Lupin Returns*, a good mystery thriller with Melvyn Douglas in the title role. *The Baroness and the Butler*, co-starring Annabella and William Powell, has some good ideas for its story. A butler becomes a Member of Parliament in opposition to his master. The idea is good but there it ends. Wallace Beery appears in *Port of Seven Seas*, an adaptation of a well-known Marcel Pagnol story of the Marseilles water front. Beery does very well in a character created by Raimu, and the water front atmosphere is good. Shirley Temple is in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, which has very little relation to the Mary Pickford classic and little to commend it beyond the star's performance.

"Vessel of Wrath . . ."

AUGUST RELEASES

Owd Bob (Gainsborough) *
DIRECTOR: Robert Stevenson
STARRING: Will Fyffe, Margaret Lockwood, John Loder
(Reviewed July)

Bringing Up Baby (R.K.O. Radio)
DIRECTOR: Howard Hawks
STARRING: Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, Charles Ruggles
(Reviewed May–June)

Vessel of Wrath (Mayflower) *
DIRECTOR: Erich Pommer
STARRING: Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, Tyrone Guthrie, Robert Newton
(Reviewed April)

Mannequin (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Frank Borsage
STARRING: Joan Crawford, Spencer Tracy
(Reviewed March)

Port of Seven Seas (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: James Whale
STARRING: Wallace Beery, Frank Morgan, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Beal
(Reviewed August)

REVIVALS

The Invisible Man (G.F.D.)
DIRECTOR: James Whale
STARRING: Claude Rains, Gloria Stuart

Frankenstein (G.F.D.)
DIRECTOR: James Whale
STARRING: Boris Karloff, Colin Clive

Mayor of Hell (Warner Brothers)
DIRECTOR: Archie L. Mayo
STARRING: James Cagney

Picture Snatcher (Warner Brothers)
DIRECTOR: Lloyd Bacon
STARRING: James Cagney

Winner Take All (Warner Brothers)
STARRING: James Cagney

Public Enemy (Warner Brothers)
STARRING: James Cagney

Taxi (Warner Brothers)
STARRING: James Cagney

News from the Native Quarter

Jon Hall, who starred opposite Dorothy Lamour in "Hurricane," is a champion swimmer and in 1926 *won the Tahiti swimming championship.*

On the island they call him "Terutev-aegiai"—a quick way of saying "Young White God on Heaven's Highest Shelf."

—News Item

In the little-known Hollywood district of California, many similar titles have been conferred on the natives. For instance, there is an old aborigine, his face hideously disfigured by the old tribal custom of registering emotion, who is known among his people as "Osolousi"—a quick way of saying "Old White Elephant on Hollywood's Highest Shelf."

Sensational reports of the barbarous customs prevalent among these backward tribes are now filtering through to civilisation. Only the other day a well-known British author staggered into Wardour Street, wild-eyed and gibbering, with fantastic stories of the tortures he had suffered at their hands. He told of days, nay weeks, spent locked in a native hut and *forced to think*. The effort, he said, nearly cost him his sanity; the hut itself was primitive and rudely furnished, the floor being littered with *scenario* leaves. The *scenario*, he explained, is an evil-smelling fungoid growth which flourishes in the humid Hollywood swamplands.

He told, too, how one day he looked from his prison on to the clearing in the centre of the native camp, or *lot*. Here he actually saw young children exposed for long periods to the savage glare of the *kleig-light*. The initiation ceremony which the young men and maidens have to undergo before becoming members of the tribe is, it seems, even more barbarous. They are expected to assist nightly at fearful rites at a nearby drinking-hole, known to the natives as The Brown Bowler.

Otherwise, the intrepid traveller assured us, the natives are friendly, fond of dancing and light wines and childishly pleased by gifts of coloured beads or bromo-seltzer. He showed us a wad of the curious coinage used by natives, known as *dollas*. It appears that one or two of the tribal chiefs had insisted on his taking a plentiful supply of the money back home with him. "Show it around to your friends," were their parting words, half grave, half gay. "We're giving it away."

NATURE NOTES

Tom-tits have built a nest in the pocket of a waistcoat which is hanging in a garden at Romsey, Hampshire. Three eggs are being hatched.

—News Item

Rather lovable, don't you think? But, mind you, by no means unique.

There is a certain well-known British film magnate who has, since early in the year, been harbouring a nest of blackbirds in the gap between his pullover and the top of his trousers—"Smugglers Gap," as it was laughingly referred to by the shareholders.

It was a common sight in spring to see the male and female birds, obviously very much in love, flying back and forth with pieces of the studio in their beaks, to fashion them into the snug little nest in which they were to face life together. The contract department furnished them with many unwanted scraps of paper which the clever birds would weave into the structure of their new home.

By April all was ready and the feathered honeymooners moved into their new home and soon grew accustomed to their strange environment. It soon became known that Mr. and Mrs. Blackbird were expecting a happy event and imagine the delight of one and all when one morning the little nest was heavier by five of the loveliest speckled eggs you ever saw!

Helped on by the warmth of their surroundings the eggs soon hatched out and the baby blackbirds lost no time in announcing—in no uncertain voices— their arrival into the big, wonderful world. Alas, only four little strangers came to bless the nest as one egg had been broken when the magnate slapped his stomach laughing at one of his own jokes. "His first smash-hit in years," as one morbid onlooker observed.

Such was the twittering the little strangers set up that a number of newspaper men hurried to the scene, under the impression that the magnate was about to make his weekly announcement of the next season's line-up. Imagine their astonishment at finding four lovable little bundles of bald bird peeking at them through gaps in the magnate's pants!

Life goes on happily for the blackbird family in their strange home. "George and I will probably never move from here now," Mrs. Blackbird told me. "It is a little noisy at times and in warm weather the damp is apt to come through the walls, and we do not get on very well with some of the insects who are our neighbours. George wants to move to a better district, but I tell him that that is impossible until the children can fend for themselves."

She looked up proudly to where her young ones were romping happily in the magnate's

(*Continued at foot of col.* 3)

SNOOKS GRIESER TO WRITE FOR WORLD FILM NEWS!

Press Lord's Tribute

Commencing with the August issue, Snooks Grieser, *WFN*'s redundant lift-boy, is to contribute a monthly article on matters of universal interest. The feature will be called Snooks Grieser's Key-Hole Column.

He will probe into the hearts of the people.
He will probe into their pockets.
He will listen to their conversations.
He will get lynched, we hope.

But Grieser will go on—the champion of lost causes—the receiver of stolen goods—the carrier of contagious diseases. The Cinema, the Theatre, Literature, Personalities—no sphere of human activities will be safe from the attentions of the Boy Crusader. Grieser dips his pen in vitriol. Only a Post Office pen could stand it. Only *WFN* would dare to print it. Not even *WFN* are going to pay for it.

GRIESER HAS GUTS!
GRIESER HAS BREADTH!
GRIESER HAS BOILS!

Following upon the announcement of this —the greatest scoop in film journalism—came a shoal of congratulatory messages from prominent figures in Press circles. Lord Blatherskite writes: "The greatest step backwards in the history of journalism since the birth of the *Daily Mule*."

Other tributes are as follows:—

"My heart is too full for words."—*Godfrey Swoon.*

"My collar is too tight to express my feelings."—*Lord Wrestlecrosse.*

My Downfall—from Liftboy to Litterateur —the romantic life-story of Snooks Grieser's rise to fame—will be found on another page . . . if the police haven't torn it out.

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hair. "I *do* wish the children wouldn't play there," she said. "One never knows *what* they may pick up." With that she asked to be excused and hurried away to reprove her eldest for pecking pieces out of the magnate's ear. "Put that down at once, Albert," she ordered. "You don't know *where* it's been."

And what of the man himself who has given up so much of his time and his trousers to his feathered friends? "Rather than disturb the tiny creatures who have sought shelter from me," he said, wincing as a baby blackbird kicked him in the eye, "I have given up eating."

We caught the whimsical twist to his mouth as he said this and joined in his hearty laughter. He gave up eating years ago.

ALORUM

CONVERSATION PIECE

"How about going to the movies to-night?"

"Good idea. Anything good on?"

"I don't know. Let's look in the local paper."

"I've got it here. Oh, it's this week's—it only gives next week's programme."

"Well, where's last week's?"

"Here it is. Let's see now—at the Odium there's *Chest Pilot* with Clark Able and Myrna Joy."

"That's rather good, isn't it?"

"Well, Charles saw it and didn't care for it very much."

"All right then, we won't go and see it."

"Oh, I don't know. You can't go by what old Charles says."

"Well, we may as well see what else is on before we make up our minds."

"Let's see—there's Messie Jatthews in *Wailing Along* at the Redundant."

"Oh, what a pity—I've seen that."

"Quite a film-fan, aren't you?"

"But honestly, I wouldn't mind seeing it again."

"Oh, you don't want to see it again if you've seen it once. I wonder what else is on. Ah, there's Katharine Hipbath in *Ringing up Abie* at the Colossus."

"Oh, don't let's go there. I can't stand the back of the organist's neck."

"Well, it's getting a bit late for the movies now."

"Oh, I don't know. We'll be in time for the big picture, if we go right away."

"Very well, where shall it be?"

"You decide. I decided last time."

"Okay—we'll make it the Odium."

"But didn't Charles say that picture was slightly lousy."

"Well, let's go and see *Wailing Along*. You won't mind sitting through it again, will you?"

"No, I wouldn't *really* mind, but if there is anything else on that I haven't seen. . . ."

"That leaves the Colossus. Come on, let's go."

"But, darling—that *dreadful* organist! I know, how about that funny little place in the High Street—they get incredibly good pictures there if you can stand the smell. . . . . George, where are you taking me—the Odium?"

"No, dear—the Crematorium."

CLASS CONSCIOUS

Bookings for school films are now being made at nearly double the rate they were made last year.

—News Item

"Jones Minor! Where are you going?"

"Please, sir, this is where I came in."

"You have yet to see the trailer of next week's chemistry lesson. I can promise you several explosions. Kindly be seated."

A Star's Goodbye to her Studio

Thanks for the memory
Of hours I used to sit
Around the place and knit
While half-a-dozen stooges fixed
A set that wouldn't fit—
How lovely it was.

And thanks for the memory
Of half-a-dozen flops,
That you still think are tops,
And all the British pictures
Made by Poles and Greeks and Wops—
How lovely it was.

I met such a nice lot of people,
And they seemed to know all the questions,
But oh! the improper suggestions!
Still, I got my cheque,
So what the heck.

Oh, thanks for the memory
Of endless night-club shots
And scenes with babies' cots,
That clever German cameraman
Who emphasised my spots—
Cheerio and tootle-oo.

Goodbye and nuts to you—
And thank you *so* much.

(*With acknowledgments.*)

Sayings

"There can only be one career in the family."—*Clifford Odets.*

"There isn't a natural beauty in Hollywood."—*Ern Westmore.*

"Girls are gradually getting back into the shape Nature intended them to have . . . a little curve here and there pleases everybody."—*Chorus Director Chuck Hansen.*

"Every American company remains solvent from the amount of money it gets out of England."—*Mr. Joseph Kennedy.*

"There are some lovely women in France."—*M. Domergue.*

"The secret of a good party is to ask the wrong people and mix them up. A good hostess has to be cruel."—*Elsa Maxwell.*

Away from it all

A plan has been put forward to show travel films in the Sing Sing Prison Cinema "depicting the lure of the open road and the beauties of other climes."

—News Item

Many an old lag discovered attempting to slip out at the tradesmen's entrance after the second house has been heard to say, "Aw heck, warden, it's that Mr. Lowell Thomas—he kinda brings out de gypsy in me."

"SWING IT, CHARLIE."

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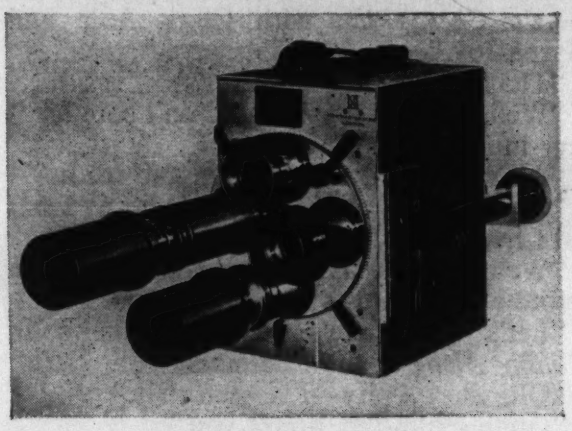

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—The Cinema.

"*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*"

ROBERT WIENE

An exclusive account of the life of the man who made 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari'

ROBERT WIENE, film director, died in Paris during July. An emigré from Germany, he was nearly 60 years of age and had been without work for a long time. The Press, however, has not mentioned the real cause of his death: he died of fame.

Film fame is of two kinds; both are deadly. There is the fame of the popular "star" which kills its owner as soon as he loses his job, the film company having entangled him in a publicity-life which, as a private individual, he cannot afford. There is the more exclusive fame of the film director who presents an important work which drives him out of his profession by overshadowing the whole of his later career. D. W. Griffith is an example.

This was the fate of Robert Wiene. Critics could not understand his inability to repeat his first great success, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*—the biggest freak in film history. Finally Wiene became weary and just sought a quiet "commercial" job, as have done dozens of other able directors, whilst the motion picture industry assumed that he was too concerned with Art to accept what it might have offered him.

The fame of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, its historic importance and its legendary glory have lasted for nearly 20 years. It must have been shown by every Film Society in Britain. In it Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover and Werner Krauss played memorable parts.

Its making came about like this. In 1919 Robert Wiene, the son of an Austrian actor and a former student of Theatre History at the Vienna University, was invited to prove his worth on an experimental work in Berlin. Life was exciting in Berlin in 1919, crowded with revolutionary movements in the political as well as the social life of the country. "Expressionism" was the slogan of the day. Three painters—Herman Warm, Walther Röhrig and Walther Reimann—got hold of a film-scenario and designed its background by means of hundreds of expressionist drawings. It is said that one of the two authors, Hans Janowitz, strongly objected to this "expressionist" treatment, but Carl Mayer, the other author (who later was to become such an important figure in the German cinema), and Wiene's enthusiasm, prevailed. The theory was that the sets and costumes should be more than a background, they should be an elaborate psychological reflection of the story in its minutest detail: a theory that was to prevail for the next six years of German cinema.

Caligari, as Robert Wiene produced it, was a revolution, wholly in the spirit of the time. It succeeded in drawing the attention of intellectuals in Europe and America to the artistic possibilities of the film. It inspired much literature on film problems and provided a basis for discussion on the real purpose of the cinema. Some critics decry its close relations to the theatre. Others applaud its active approach. It came at a time when America was flooding the screens of the world with bright, sophisticated movies and adventure films of the western type.

The practical consequence of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was an era of expressionist films, putting the German experiments in the foreground of contemporary film art. Among them we remember Kobe's *Torgus*, Martin's *From Morn till Midnight*, Leni's *Waxworks* and Murnau's *Nosferatu* (*Dracula*). Robert Wiene took his further share by shooting *Genuine*, *Raskolnikoff* and *Orlac's Hands*. But the expressionist style faded into the background as realism prevailed. It had presented merely an exotic, decorative frame to stories with inadequate plots which only served their purpose to liquidate German post-war inhibitions.

Wiene's last films of importance were *Inri*, the story of Christ, and *Rosenkavalier* to the music of Richard Strauss. They were theatrical decorations quite unlike the style and aims of *Caligari*.

During his last years, Wiene made desperate efforts to revive *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* by shooting it again as a sound film. He tried to adapt its scenario to the new technique, to the new film business and even to the new politics of to-day. He was unable, however, to obtain the necessary financial support and was thus happily prevented from repeating a film, the success of which remains as unrepeatable as by-gone history itself.

Kraszna-Krausz

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FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

BLACKPOOL: Plaza	August 21, 4 days
ISLINGTON: Empress	August 4, 3 days
NAIRN: Regal	August 4, 3 days
SOUTHWICK: New Kinema	August 18, 3 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw.

ADLINGTON: Cinema	August 4, 3 days
ARMTHORPE: Scala	August 1, 3 days
BLANTYRE: Picture House	August 3, 3 days
DIPTON: Empire	August 1, 3 days
EDLINGTON: Cinema	August 19, 2 days
KELLS: Savoy	August 11, 2 days
RUSH: Savoy	August 9, 2 days
SWANAGE: Grand	August 8, 3 days
THURNSCOE: Cinema	August 15, 2 days
WILLINGTON QUAY: Pearl	August 25, 3 days

Granton Trawler (A documentary of deep sea fishing).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: John Grierson.

NEWCASTLE: News Theatre	August 1, 6 days

Insect Oddities (A nature study).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BLACKPOOL: Rendezvous	August 4, 3 days
CROYDON: Savoy	August 21, 1 day
LONDON, EDGWARE ROAD: Blue Hall	August 1, 6 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: News Theatre	August 8, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	August 1, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Pavilion	August 1, 3 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous Mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

BALLYMENA: State	August 19, 2 days
BANBRIDGE: Picture House	August 4, 2 days
CARRICKFERGUS: Ideal	August 29, 3 days
GARNDIFFAITH: Workman's Hall	August 29, 3 days
NETHYBRIDGE: Cinema	August 2, 2 days
NEWTONMORE: Cinema	August 2, 2 days
TILBURY: Palace	August 22, 3 days

Lancashire Lakeland (Scenic beauties of Lakeland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CROYDON: Savoy	August 23, 1 day
LANCASTER: County	August 15, 6 days
NORBURY: Rex	August 14, 1 day
SHOEBURYNESS: Palace	August 21, 4 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	August 8, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Pavilion	August 8, 6 days

Land of the Marimba.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BIRKENHEAD: Gaumont	August 22, 6 days
CHESTER: Gaumont Palace	August 1, 6 days
EAST GRINSTEAD: Radio Centre	August 8, 3 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	August 8, 6 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	August 18, 3 days
HARBORNE: Picture House	August 25, 3 days
IPSWICH: Regent	August 15, 6 days
KILBURN: Palace	August 18, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	August 29, 6 days
LIVERPOOL, PRINCES PARK: Gaumont	August 29, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Plaza	August 29, 6 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 15, 3 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace	August 29, 6 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House	August 11, 3 days

Mountain Barriers.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BURY: Odeon	August 11, 3 days
CHESTER: Music Hall	August 15, 6 days
CREWE: Odeon	August 22, 3 days
DALKEITH: Pavilion	August 11, 3 days
GLASGOW: Kings	August 18, 3 days
HAMILTON: La Scala	August 18, 3 days
HOXTON: Varieties	August 1, 3 days
LONDON, STRATFORD, E.: Imperial	August 1, 3 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	August 18, 3 days
NEWPORT, MON.: Odeon	August 8, 6 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 11, 3 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace	August 25, 3 days
STOKE: Hippodrome	August 29, 6 days
TAUNTON: Gaumont Palace	August 15, 6 days
WHALLEY RANGE: Odeon	August 8, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema	August 11, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt.

BEWDLEY: Garden	August 1, 3 days
CARDONAGH: Colgan	August 14, 2 days
CRANLEIGH: Regal	August 22, 3 days
CURRAGH: Sandes	August 4, 3 days
MACHYNLLETH: Powys	August 11, 3 days
TILBURY: Palace	August 1, 3 days

FILMS
at the
TATLER THEATRE
Charing Cross Road

August 1	All Disney Programme
August 8	*Little Bear* (A.B.F.D.) *Catch of the Season* (Secrets of Life series; G.F.D.)
August 15	All Disney Programme
August 22	*Zoo and You* (Strand Films) *Land of Rhodes* (Colmore Films)
August 29	All Disney Programme

People in the Parks.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford.

BARNARD CASTLE: Scala	August 11, 3 days
BIRSTALL: Low Lane	August 15, 3 days
BURRADON: Lyric	August 1, 3 days
CARCROFT: Cinema	August 19, 2 days
CASTLETON: Ideal	August 8, 3 days
DARTMOUTH: Cinedrome	August 8, 3 days
DURSLEY: Odeon	August 22, 3 days
GRIMSBY: Tower	August 1, 6 days
HINDLEY: Palace	August 29, 3 days
LITTLEBORO': Queens	August 1, 3 days
MARPLE: Regent	August 1, 3 days
SHILDON: Picture House	August 21, 3 days
SOUTHWELL: Ideal	August 15, 3 days
SWANAGE: Grand	August 11, 3 days
THURNSCOE: Cinema	August 15, 2 days
WILLINGTON QUAY: Pearl	August 25, 3 days
WINTON: Moderne	August 25, 3 days

Picture People.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARROW: Coliseum	August 15, 6 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	August 1, 3 days
HEREFORD: Odeon	August 8, 3 days
HULL: Carlton	August 15, 3 days
HULL: Cecil	August 8, 6 days
HULL: National	August 18, 3 days
HULL: Playhouse	August 25, 3 days
HULL: Savoy	August 15, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler News Theatre	August 22, 6 days
NOTTINGHAM: Grand	August 1, 3 days
WOLVERHAMPTON: Scala	August 8 ,3 days

Power.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARROW: Coliseum	August 22, 6 days
CHIPPENHAM: Gaumont Palace	August 15, 3 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	August 18, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	August 18, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	August 11, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	August 25, 3 days
KETTERING: Odeon	August 22, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Grand	August 8, 3 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 4, 3 days
SWINDON: Palace	August 18, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema	August 25, 3 days

Six-Thirty Collection (Documentary of the West End Sorting office).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey and Harry Watt.

EDLINGTON: Cinema	August 19, 2 days

Sunny Tessin (Survey of the Canton Tessin, Southern Switzerland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

CARLISLE: City	August 29, 3 days
GRIMSBY: Savoy	August 29, 6 days
LEEDS: Hillcrest Picture Lounge	August 8, 3 days
LONDON, PICCADILLY CIRCUS: Eros News Theatre	August 15, 3 days
LONDON, VICTORIA STATION: News Theatre	August 1, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler News Theatre	August 1, 6 days

This Other Eden (A trip down the river Eden, in Westmorland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CROYDON: Savoy	August 14, 1 day
HEYWOOD: Picturedrome	August 18, 3 days
MABLETHORPE: Victoria	August 25, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: Ritz	August 29, 6 days
SCUNTHORPE: Jubilee	August 4, 3 days
STALYBRIDGE: Princes	August 15, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Pavilion	August 22, 6 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson.

ARMTHORPE: Scala	August 1, 2 days
CAERPHILLY: Castle	August 29, 2 days
CASTLETON: Ideal	August 8, 3 days
COXHOE: Gem	August 4, 3 days
CRAMLINGTON: Rex	August 1, 2 days
HINDLEY: Palace	August 29, 3 days
STOCKPORT: King's	August 19, 2 days
WIGTOWN: Palace	August 29, 3 days

Town and Gown (Buildings, scenery and life of Oxford and Cambridge).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Peter Collin.

CHELMSFORD: Ritz	August 8, 6 days
CHICHESTER: Plaza	August 11, 3 days
HEREFORD: Odeon	August 21, 7 days
NORWICH: Carlton	August 29, 6 days
WELSHPOOL: Pola	August 15, 3 days

Tropical Springtime (Travelogue on Costa Rica).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BIRKENHEAD: Super	August 1, 3 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	August 29, 3 days
LANCASTER: County	August 29, 3 days
PORTSMOUTH: Classic	August 21, 4 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 25, 3 days

Valleys of Romance.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARNSTAPLE: Gaumont Palace	August 8, 6 days
GUERNSEY: Gaumont Palace	August 1, 6 days
GUERNSEY: Gaumont Palace	August 15, 6 days
HARROW: Coliseum	August 29, 7 days
ILFRACOMBE: Scala	August 8, 6 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	August 22, 6 days

Shorts (contd.)

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes.

BERMONDSEY: Rialto	August 11, 3 days
BIRSTALL: Low Lane	August 15, 3 days
BURNHOPE: Miners	August 18, 3 days
BURRADON: Lyric	August 1, 3 days
CAISTOR: Cinema	August 11, 2 days
CURRAGH: Sandes	August 11, 3 days
GARNDIFFAITH: Workman's Hall	August 29, 2 days
LIMERICK: Tivoli	August 1, 2 days
NORTHAMPTON: Regal	August 4, 3 days
TILBURY: Palace	August 18, 3 days
WARLEY: Odeon	August 15, 6 days
WREXHAM: Glynn	August 29, 2 days

Weather Forecast (How information is gathered for official forecasts).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson.
DIRECTION: Evelyn Spice.

CARCROFT: Cinema	August 19, 2 days

Youth Marches On (True-life saga of Empire youth, inspired by the Oxford Group).
DISTRIBUTION: Butcher's Film Service Ltd.
PRODUCTION: Positive Productions.
DIRECTION: Eric Parfit and George Fraser.

ASHFORD: Odeon	August 8, 6 days
BANGOR: Plaza	August 22, 6 days
BARKING: Rio	August 8, 6 days
BATH: News Theatre	August 8, 6 days
BEBINGTON: Regal	August 4, 3 days
BIRKENHEAD: Empire	August 1, 6 days
BRIXHAM: Electric	August 4, 3 days
CHESTER: Odeon	August 29, 6 days
CLEATOR MOOR: Hippodrome	August 4, 3 days
COBHAM: Savoy	August 15, 6 days
CRAVEN ARMS: Regal	August 22, 6 days
DEAL: Odeon	August 1, 6 days
DEWSBURY: Pioneer	August 15, 6 days
DUNDEE: Kinema	August 15, 6 days
DUNDEE: Kinnaird	August 15, 6 days
FARNHAM: Regal	August 25, 3 days
FAVERSHAM: Odeon	August 18, 3 days
FINCHLEY: Odeon	August 15, 6 days
FROME: Grand	August 22, 6 days
GOOLE: Tower	August 29, 6 days
HARPENDEN: Austral	August 25, 3 days
HARROGATE: Odeon	August 29, 6 days
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: Luxor	August 1, 6 days
HULL: National	August 18, 3 days
HULL: Cecil	August 15, 6 days
HULL: Dorchester	August 15, 6 days
ILFORD: Savoy	August 8, 6 days
IRVINE: Kyrle Palace	August 15, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Walton Vale	August 4, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Prince of Wales	August 18, 3 days
MORETON: Picturehouse	August 1, 6 days
NORWICH: Carlton	August 8, 6 days
PETERBOROUGH: Odeon	August 8, 6 days
PORTRUSH: Picturehouse	August 1, 6 days
RAMSGATE: Royal	August 29, 6 days
RAYNES PARK: Rialto	August 15, 6 days
RICHMOND: Richmond	August 15, 6 days
ST. ALBAN'S: Chequers	August 29, 6 days
TENBURY WELLS: Regal	August 8, 6 days
TENTERDEN: Embassy	August 1, 6 days
THROCKLEY: Lyric	August 22, 6 days
TIVERTON: Electric	August 18, 3 days
WALLASEY: Queens	August 18, 3 days
NORTH WALSHAM: Royal	August 8, 6 days
WATFORD: Regal	August 8, 6 days
WARRINGTON: Picturehouse	August 4, 3 days
WORCESTER: Scala	August 1, 6 days

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Foreign Films

The Last Night (Russian)
DIRECTION: Yu. Raizman
STARRING: M. G. Yarotskaya, N. I. Dorokhin, I. R. Peltser, N. N. Ribnikov
LONDON: Academy — Indefinitely (after *Le Roi S'amuse*)

L'homme du Jour (French)
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Maurice Chevalier, Elvire Popesco, Alerme
LONDON: Berkeley — Indefinitely

Orage (French)
DIRECTION: Marc Allegret
STARRING: Charles Boyer, Michèle Morgan, Jean-Louis Barrault
LONDON: Curzon — Until August 7

The Thirteen (Russian)
DIRECTION: Michael Romm
STARRING: I. Novoseltsev, Kuzmina, A. Chistyakov, A. Feit
LONDON: Forum — Until August 14

Double Crime sur la Ligne Maginot (French)
DIRECTION: Félix Gandéra
STARRING: Victor Francen, Vera Korène
LONDON: Forum — August 14 until 28

Liszt Rhapsody (German)
DIRECTION: Carmine Gallone
STARRING: Paul Hörbiger, Sybille Schmitz, Luis Rainer, Ida Wüst
LONDON: Studio One — Indefinitely (after July 29)

CULTURE FILMS UNDER THE NAZIS

In the recent special film-number of *Wille und Macht* (Will and Power), chief organ of the Nazi Youth, Frank Maraun, the German film-critic, vigorously attacks the Reich's policy for films. The following extracts published from this paper by the *Deutsche Informationen* reveal how the German culture film, sent abroad by Goebbels as propaganda, is treated at home.

There are two outstanding characteristics of the German culture film : its undeniable merit, acknowledged even by other countries, and the fact that it is always forced to take a Cinderella part. Yet the culture films were the bright lights of last year's film production. Our entertainment films were much less readily acclaimed.

It is well worth our while taking the trouble to understand what this means. The independent film producers, who make films on their own account and sell to the Renters are forced, by the conditions of a greatly overstocked market, to accept a rate of payment which can scarcely be expected to keep them alive. Many, in fact, drop out of existence. There were about 150 independent producers of culture films in Germany, two or three years ago. To-day, not more than twenty of these are left.

It is true that the Reich department for films has decreed, as a protective measure, a minimum price of 10 Reichsmarks per meter; but, in the open market, the minimum tends to become the maximum. The Renters often try to save expenses, also, by lowering the price for the music accompaniment, which they customarily commission for each picture they have received. The usual rate for the composer is now one Reichsmark per meter. With an average length of 300 to 350 meters, this means a total fee of about 300 to 350 marks.

Bitter thoughts arise when we compare the lavishness with which money is spent on feature films. The average feature film of to-day usually costs about 500,000 marks to produce.

The culture film section of Tobis has now been merged with Ufa, which means that the production of German culture films has been concentrated at a single centre. The open market is thus restricted to the American Renters and a few of the smaller German companies. Ufa now engages a number of independent producers of culture films to co-operate in its production schedule, and we can only hope that the company will be careful not to reduce to a general level of dull uniformity the individual qualities of the independents. We need a courageous vanguard, a group of pioneers able, step by step, to discover the creative possibilities of the film and to make use of them.

Nouvelles Allemandes, Paris

Television

Each month Thomas Baird will keep W.F.N. readers fully informed on the progress and development of Television in Great Britain

An American visitor to this country, when asked what he thought of the Derby, guessed that it had come to stay. Something of the same might be said about television; the fact is that television is no longer merely experimental; it is an amazingly accomplished fact.

It is true, of course, that television must remain experimental so long as it is limited by the money the Department has to spend, and as it is expensive listening hours must be, for the time at least, limited. It is also true that television sets are expensive and we must not expect to find one in every back parlour just yet. But the same was true of gramophones and wireless sets and is still true in a degree of home film projectors. But one experience of an outside broadcast by television is quite sufficient to convince anyone that television has come to stay.

I can remember, it must have been about 1922, hearing a man say, when listening to a crystal set, that he did not believe for a moment that the B.B.C. were so foolish as to have an orchestra in the studio. He was convinced that when the announcer told us that we were to hear a Symphony Orchestra that an engineer merely played a gramophone record. He failed to appreciate that the playing of a gramophone record did not detract from the miracle of radio but, if anything, added to it. The B.B.C. have since proved this. The significant fact is that radio is a means of mass communication and that while the old gramophone filled the homes of individuals, the gramophone by radio filled the homes of the nation. It will therefore be no detraction from the marvel of television if the B.B.C. make use of film, and indeed I hope they will make more and more use of film. If they did little more than carry the already considerable mass of documentary, instructional and travel films to the millions of people whom these films normally pass by, they will have done something worthy of achievement.

But already they are doing much more than this. Radio in general, in spite of the arty and crafty hokum which has surrounded a number of programmes, continues to be significant for two reasons. One is that it is the most universal means of mass communication, and second there is its immediacy. Radio can report within the split second; so, too, can television. The most exciting broadcasts have been the outside ones such as *The Derby*, *The Trooping of the Colour* and *The Boat Race*. While the mass communication of these programmes might be limited to merely thousands of sets, the immediacy was electric. Newsreels seemed historical records the day after one had seen the Derby by television. The Test Match broadcast indeed made most newsreels look pretty silly. Here, with no time lag, was a brilliant account of the excitement of the game, and the amount of detail picked up by the carefully handled cameras was magnificent. The television camera cannot make a cut in the film sense but the quick mix from bowler to batsman was an indication that television had something of its own to offer. All this is merely a confirmation of something that radio has demonstrated again and again. The biggest listening audiences, I believe, are for the King's speech on Christmas Day and for the nine o'clock broadcast of football pools results from non-B.B.C. stations. Research figures are reputed to show that there is a very large audience for the news bulletin, the weather forecast and for any major sport event. This seems to indicate that the public do rely on radio in the first place as a news agency in the widest sense of the word. In spite, therefore, of the enthusiasms of some for the Foundations of Music and the Experimental Drama hour, I remain convinced that the very stuff of radio can be made out of its ability to tell all the people all about everything all the time—and no fooling. Television, even in its present form, does this admirably with an immediacy and an intimacy denied to any other medium. It would be well if the television department concentrated on this signal service in their near developments.

The version of *Julius Cæsar* broadcast on Sunday, 24th July, illustrated this point admirably. There were three points of interest in the production:

(1) It was a play which we all knew.
(2) It was done in modern dress.
(3) It introduced the penumbrascope.

It is a great play. As it is written it depends chiefly on the actors and the words. On or off the stage the same criterion applies to the speeches. If they are well spoken half the battle is won. Most of the actors did well, but as usual, Cæsar himself proved the most difficult part and as usual was the least satisfying. So much for the criticism which must obtain in any presentation. What had Television to offer that the stage had not? Mr. Dallas Bower, who claims some affinity with the cinema, was able to add a point or two. He dubbed the soliloquies, which was a good idea, but he did not make the distinction between the oratorical soliloquies and the subjective ones. His technique was successful so long as it represented the sub-conscious prompting of the mind in Cassius and Brutus but it failed when applied to the soliloquies which served as Chorus. Mark Antony informed the audience of the progress of his plan through sealed lips.

The super-imposed ghost, the rioting scenes and the war scenes taken from film were the kind of things we expect Television to produce, and the standard offered by film must be, if not the criterion, then the objective.

There was nothing significantly televisual in the modern dress approach but it was a good idea and worked out as well as the text would allow, though why Brutus and Cassius did not use their six-shooters on Cæsar I cannot imagine.

The penumbrascope, on the other hand, suggests great possibilities. Space and depth are difficult in a small studio and these limits bind the scope of any production. The penumbrascope which produces a shadow cyclorama does not yet give scale to the small studio but it does produce a method of quick change of scene in close-up and mid-shot. It can change mood with increased facility and I fancy it is less expensive than scenery. It needs to be worked out with more regard for the general lighting scheme and it would probably show up better with simpler foreground lighting.

There were times when the stage seemed very crowded and I wondered why Mr. Bower did not raise one of his cameras to a higher angle after the fashion that the newsreel camera oversees a procession. A wider angle of incidence of the cameras would improve the difficult mix from close-up to long shot.

I can imagine that their Drama will require to invest itself with something of this spirit if it is to be anything different from the stage or from the cinema. On the grounds of mass communication I can see no reason why television should not broadcast films or broadcast stage plays. I think they are perfectly justified to spread these two media in a fashion which is within its power only. In these cases the test of quality beyond technicalities must obviously be the test supplied normally to the stage and to films. Already we have had evidence of this. Well-written stage plays televise well: badly-written stage plays are equally bad on the air.

When we come up against something like D. H. Monro's version of a Russian Ballet rehearsal, we have got something which is bringing alive this peculiar quality with a spontaneity and immediacy which belongs to television. This production eavesdropped on reality. It was television doing its own peculiar job and therefore television at its own very best.

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